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BOETHIUS:

C O N S O L A T I O N

O F

P H I L O S O P H Y.

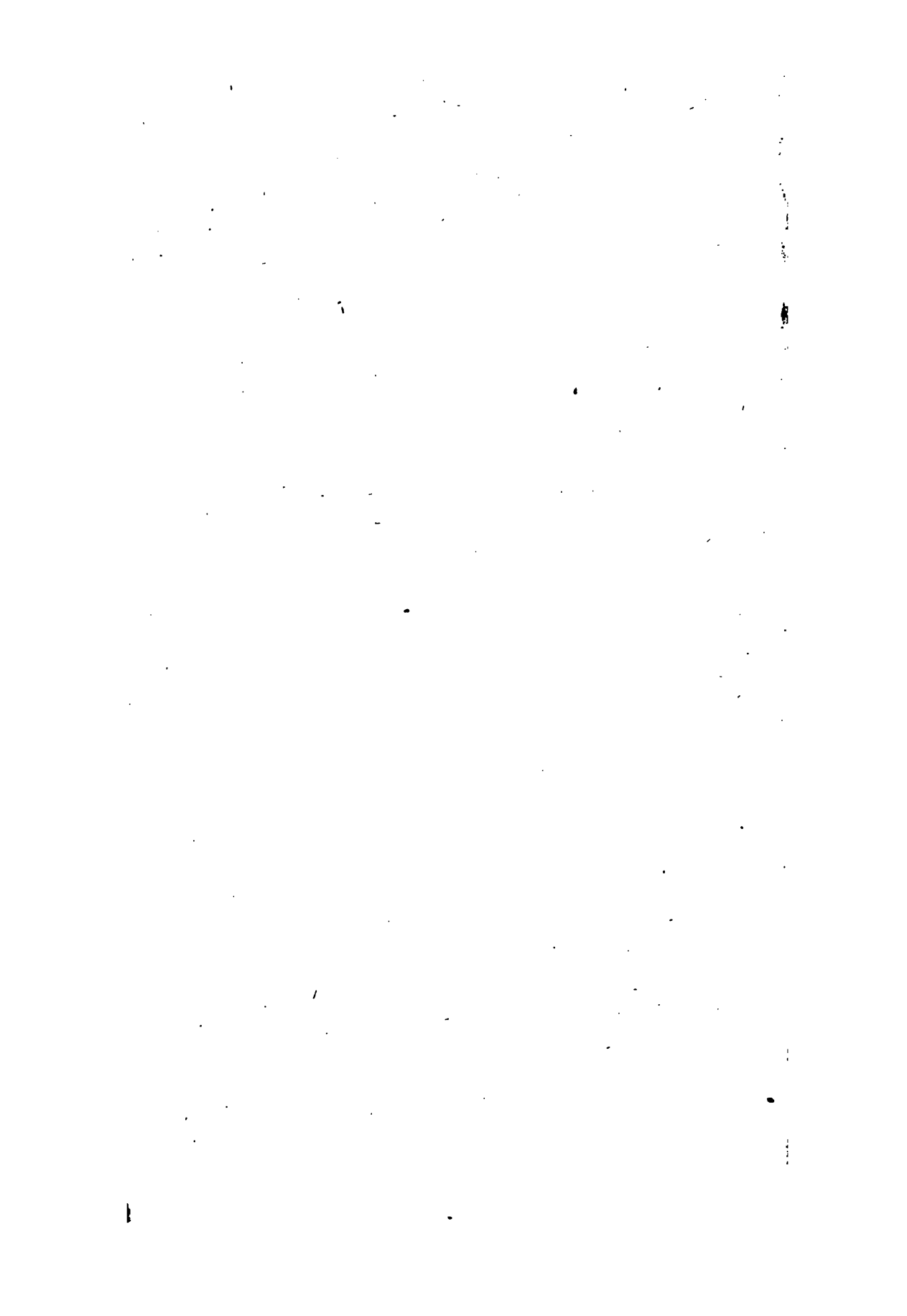
1946 d. 2.

BOETHIUS's

CONSOLATION

OF

PHILOSOPHY.



BOETHIUS's
CONSOLATION
OF
PHILOSOPHY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN,

WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

By the Rev. Mr. PHILIP RIDPATH,

MINISTER OF HUTTON, BERWICKSHIRE.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY.

M.DCC.LXXXV.

T O

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY DUNDAS,

TREASURER OF THE NAVY,

KEEPER OF THE SIGNET,

DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF ADVOCATES

IN SCOTLAND,

AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST

HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

S I R,

IN every age, Philosophy and the Muses have been the delight of great and eminent men. They have served to soothe the anxieties naturally attendant on high station, and to relieve the spirits during the intervals of business. This encourages me to
a present

The Binder is to place this Quarter Sheet immediately after the Title P

DEDICATION.

present to your patronage BOETHIUS's eloquent Treatise of THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY; a Work which has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and into the Saxon and our own by two of our most illustrious Princes, Alfred and Elizabeth. There is something congenial in great and noble minds, and what appeared interesting to them, cannot be indifferent to you. Length of time, and the mutability of language, have deprived us of the fruits of their leisure. The present version of this beautiful and philosophical Dialogue has cost me much pains and labour; and, indeed, I should never have presumed, under your protection and patronage, to offer it to the Publick, had I not endeavoured to make it as perfect as I possibly could.

Conscious

DEDICATION.

Conscious of the nature of your talents, you early quitted the humble pursuits of literature, to display the extent of your powers on the great theatre of business and affairs; and envy must allow, you have distinguished yourself in so conspicuous a manner in our national concerns, and supported your manly and generous principles of liberty and government with such force of argument and genuine eloquence, as has rendered you the boast and glory of our country. It is therefore with peculiar satisfaction that I embrace the opportunity afforded me of uniting in the general voice, and expressing my esteem and admiration of your great talents, which you employ with so much zeal, advantage, and success in the publick cause. Your generous exertions to serve our country cannot entirely engross so active
9 and

DEDICATION.

and capacious a mind; and though higher views may have interrupted the studies of your early years, yet you still look with a lover's eye on Letters and the Muses.

That you may long continue to unite the favour of your Sovereign with the confidence of every real patriot, is the sincere wish of,

SIR,

With the greatest esteem and respect,

Your most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

PHILIP RIDPATH.

LONDON, *June*, 1785.

THE

T H E
L I F E
O F
B O E T H I U S.

ANICIUS Manlius Severinus Boethius was descended from an ancient and noble family *. Many of his ancestors were senators and consuls of Rome. He was born at Rome, in the 455th year of the Christian era, 46 years after the taking of that city by Alarick I. king of the Goths. Boethius Severinus, his father, was Prefect of the palace to Valentinian III; and, by the command

* Some of the writers of his life derive his pedigree from the celebrated Manlius Torquatus.

of that emperor, was put to death in the same year which gave birth to his illustrious son. Though deprived of the care of an excellent parent, the young Boethius had the happiness of falling under the tuition of worthy relations, who gave him a good education, and inspired him with an early taste for Philosophy, and the Belles Lettres. They sent him to Athens, where these studies still flourished. He resided eighteen years in that celebrated seminary, where, animated by a noble emulation, he distinguished himself among his fellow-students, and made a surprizing progress in every branch of literature. But Philosophy and Mathematicks were his darling studies; Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, and Ptolomy, his favourite authors. He studied their writings with the utmost attention, and became master of all the treasures of science contained in them.

In

LIFE OF BOETHIUS.

vii

In this manner did Boethius employ his youth. His progress in virtue, in the mean time, kept pace with his advancement in knowledge : for he was no less remarkable for probity and humanity, than for his fine genius and extensive erudition. Upon his return to Rome, he soon attracted the publick attention. He was considered as a person born to promote the happiness of society. The most distinguished men in the city sought his friendship, perceiving that his merit would soon advance him to the first employments of the state. His alliance was wished for by persons the most respectable. But Elpis, descended from one of the most considerable families of Messina, was the lady on whom Boethius fixed his choice. His choice was fortunate ; for in Elpis there was united all the accomplishments of the head and heart. She had a fine taste in literature, par-

ticularly in poetry *, and was a shining example of every virtue ; so that she must have been a delightful companion to this eminent philosopher and statesman. She bore him two sons, Patritius and Hy-patius.

To the happiness of possessing a lady of such uncommon merit, Boethius soon had the satisfaction of obtaining the highest honour his country could bestow. He was made Consul in the year 487, at the age of 32. Odoacer, king of the Heruli, reigned at that time in Italy, who, after having put to death Orestes, and deposed his son Augustulus, the last emperor of the West, assumed the title of king of that country. Two years after Boethius's advancement to the dignity of Consul, Theo-

A. D.
480.

* There are two hymns, which are still sung in the publick worship, that are said to be of her composition. They begin, *Aurea lux*, and *Felix per-*
sona.

dorick,

LIFE OF BOETHIUS.

ix

dorick, king of the Goths, invaded Italy; and, having conquered Odoacer and put him to death, he in a short time made himself master of that country, and fixed the seat of his government at Ravenna, as Odoacer and several of the later western emperors had done before him. The Romans and the inhabitants of Italy were pleased with the government of Theodorick, because he wisely ruled them by the same laws, the same polity, and the same magistrates they were accustomed to, under the emperors. In the eighth year of this Prince's reign, Boethius had the singular felicity of beholding his two sons, Patritius and Hypatius, raised to the consular dignity. During their continuance in office, Theodorick came to Rome, where he had been long expected, and was received by the senate and people with the greatest demonstrations of joy. Boethius made him an eloquent panegyrick

A. D.
500.

panegyrick in the senate; which the king answered in the most obliging terms, declaring that he should ever have the greatest respect for that august assembly, and would never encroach upon any of their privileges. From the Senate-house Theodorick repaired to the Circus, attended by Boethius, his consul-sons, and the whole body of the senate, where he made a very ingratiating speech to the people, and where both he and Boethius dispensed to them largesses equal to their most enlarged expectations. This remarkable day concluded with a splendid feast, which the king gave to the senators. St. Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspina, in Africa, who had fled to Rome from the cruelty of Thrasimond, king of the Vandals in that country, was so much struck with the pomp and magnificence exhibited on this occasion, that he exclaimed, If terrestrial Rome is so dazzling, what must the celest-

LIFE OF BOETHIUS.

xi

tial Jerusalem be, which God hath promised to his elect!

Boethius was advanced a second time to the dignity of Consul, in the eighteenth year of the reign of king Theodorick. Power and honour could not have been conferred upon a person more worthy of them: for he was both an excellent magistrate and statesman, as he faithfully and assiduously executed the duties of his office; and employed, upon every occasion, the great influence he had at court, in protecting the innocent, relieving the needy, and in procuring the redress of such grievances as gave just cause of complaint. The care of publick affairs did not however engross his whole attention. This year, as he informs us himself *, he wrote his Commentary upon the Predicaments, or the Ten Categories of Aristotle. In

A. D.
510.

* This he tells us in the beginning of the second Book of this Commentary.

imitation

imitation of Cato, Cicero, and Brutus, he devoted the whole of his time to the service of the commonwealth, and to the cultivation of the sciences. He published a variety of writings, in which he treated upon almost every branch of literature. I shall mention the principal of them. Besides the Commentary upon Aristotle's Categories, noticed above, Boethius wrote an Explanation of that Philosopher's topicks, in eight Books; another, of his Sophisms, in two Books; and Commentaries upon many other parts of his writings. He translated the whole of Plato's works: He wrote a Commentary, in six Books, upon Cicero's topicks: He commented also upon Porphyry's writings: He published a Discourse on Rhetorick in one Book; a Treatise on Arithmetick in two Books*; and another, in five Books,

* Cassiodorus relates, that Boethius translated Nicomachus's celebrated Treatise upon Arithmetick. It is now lost.

upon

upon Musick †: He wrote three Books upon Geometry, the last of which is lost: He translated Euclid; and wrote a Treatise upon the Quadrature of the Circle; neither of which performances are now remaining: He published also translations of Ptolomy of Alexandria's works; and of the writings of the celebrated Archimedes ‡: and, to conclude this imperfect list of his learned labours, he published several Treatises upon Theological and Metaphysical subjects, which are still preserved.

The acuteness of understanding and profound erudition displayed in such a diversity of works, upon all subjects, acquired Boethius a great reputation, not

† Besides the Treatise which he himself composed upon Musick, he translated Pythagoras's Treatise upon that fine art: which is unhappily lost.

‡ The Romans at this time were almost entirely unacquainted with the Grecian literature. Boethius, by his translations and learned commentaries, revived the knowledge of it amongst them.

only

only among his countrymen, but with foreigners. Gondebald king of the Burgundians, who had married a daughter of Theodorick, came to Ravenna, on a visit to his father-in-law, and thence went to Rome ; not only with a view to see the beauties of that famous city, but that he might have the pleasure of conversing with our illustrious Philosopher. Boethius, sensible of the great honour conferred upon him by this Prince, did every thing in his power to amuse and entertain him. He showed him several curious mechanical works of his own invention, which Gondebald greatly admired ; but what chiefly struck him, were two watches or time-keepers ; one of which pointed out the sun's diurnal and annual motion in the ecliptick, upon a moveable sphere ; and the other indicated the hours of the day *,
by

* This contrivance was called a Clepsydra. It was invented in Greece, and was in use both among the

by the expedient of water dropping out of one vessel into another. So fond was Gondebald of these pieces of mechanism, that upon his return to his own country, he dispatched ambassadors to Theodorick, praying that he would procure for him the two wonderful time-keepers he had seen at Rome. Upon this occasion, Theodorick wrote to Boethius; and his letter, which is very honourable for our author, is preserved by Cassiodorus. I shall give some extracts from it. "The lord of the Burgundians," he informs him, "urges us with much importunity, by his am-

the Greeks and Romans. The water dropped from a small hole in the upper vessel, and fell into the lower. The rising of the water in the lower vessel pointed out the hours, probably by a scale of hours and parts of an hour fixed to the side of it. It is likely Boethius made some improvement upon this invention, by which he rendered it more accurate and useful.

"ambassadors,

“bassadors, that we would be pleased to
 “send him the two wonderful time-keep-
 “ers which you showed him at Rome,
 “and to send along with them the persons
 “who by your direction constructed them.
 “Such contrivances, tho’ common with
 “us,” he adds, “appear almost miracu-
 “lous to them; and hence arises their
 “earnest desire of having some of them
 “in their possession.” He tells him after-
 wards, that the Senators of Rome were
 indebted to him for the whole of their
 knowledge in the learning of the Greeks:
 “for in your admirable translations,”
 says he, “all Italy now reads with plea-
 “sure, Pythagoras the musician, Ptolomy
 “the astronomer, and Nicomachus the
 “arithmetician. By means of *these*, the
 “rich treasures contained in the geometry
 “of Euclid, the theology of Plato, and
 “the logick of Aristotle, are laid open to
 “us all. You have restored the celebrated

“ Archimedes to Sicily, his country. In
“ short, you have imported into Italy
“ all the sciences and all the arts pro-
“ duced in the fertile soil of Greece, and
“ have made them your own: for all
“ your translations are executed with such
“ perspicuity and elegance, that I am
“ persuaded a master in both languages
“ would prefer them to the originals.”

In the conclusion of his letter, Theodorick desires Boethius to send him the above-mentioned time-keepers, to be transmitted to Gondobald, that the fame of his ingenuity might be made known to a country where he could not go in person. “ Teach foreign nations,” adds he, “ that we have nobles who are
“ not inferior in genius to the celebrated
“ authors whose fame is spread every
“ where. When such curious inventions
“ were mentioned to these distant people,
“ they looked upon them as mere dreams

b

“ and

“ and chimeras. But they will be convinced of their error, when they see these wonders realized; and they will not dare equal themselves to us, when they know that we have amongst us philosophers, capable of inventing and executing such ingenious performances.”

By this letter it appears in what high esteem Boethius was held by Theodorick, who was a prince of great capacity, and governed hitherto with much prudence, equity, and moderation. But these eminent virtues he afterwards sullied by flagrant acts of cruelty and injustice.— During the course of these transactions, Boethius lost his beloved wife Elpis, the faithful partner of his domestick cares, his pleasures, and his studies*. To comfort

* She was buried in Rome, in the Portico of St. Peter, where her epitaph still remains. I shall subjoin a part of it :

Elpis

fort himself under this affliction (for the wife man comforts himself under every event) he married a second time; and had the uncommon felicity of being again equally happy in his choice. The lady whom he chose for his consort was Rusticana, the daughter of Symmachus, one of the most respectable men in Rome for birth, learning, and probity. This lady bore him two sons, Symmachus and Boethius; who, as we are informed in the second book of the Consolation, were conspicuous in their youth for very eminent talents.

Boethius was a third time elected Consul, along with Symmachus, his father-

A. D.
522.

*Elpis dicta fui, Siculæ regionis alumna,
Quam procul a patria conjugis egit amor;
Quo sine mœsta dies, nox anxia, flebilis hora.
* * * * *
Porticibus sacris jam nunc peregrina quiesco,
Judicis Æterni testificata thronum.*

in-law, in the 30th year of Theodorick's reign. Neither ambition nor interest prompted him, in the decline of life, to undertake that high office: he had no other view but to promote the good of the State, and to protect those worthy citizens whose suffrages had advanced him to that dignity. This was his last Consulship: during the course of it he had the misfortune to fall under the displeasure of king Theodorick.—Boethius had been hitherto remarkably fortunate: he had lived long in health, affluence, and splendor; had attained to every honour he could expect; and had preserved invariably the esteem and affection of his fellow-citizens. During the course of almost forty years, for capacity and probity, he was undoubtedly the most distinguished character in Rome. His uncommon merit, however, and his great influence, did not prevent his ruin; they were probably

bably the causes of it.—King Theodorick was an Arian; and Boethius, who was a Catholick, unluckily published about this time a Book upon the Unity of the Trinity, in opposition to the three famous sects of Arians, Nestorians, and Eutychians. This treatise was universally read, and created our author a great many enemies at court; who insinuated to the prince, that Boethius wanted not only to destroy Arianism, but to effectuate a change of government, and deliver Italy from the dominion of the Goths; and that, from his great credit and influence, he was the most likely person to bring about such a revolution.—Whilst his enemies were thus busied at Ravenna, they employed emissaries to sow the seeds of discontent at Rome, and to excite factious people openly to oppose him in the exercise of his office as Consul.—Boethius, in

the mean while, wanting no other reward than a sense of his integrity, laboured both by his eloquence and his authority to defeat their wicked attempts; and persisted resolutely in his endeavours to promote the publick welfare, by supporting the oppressed, and bringing offenders to justice. But his integrity and steadiness tended only to hasten his fall. King Theodorick, corrupted probably by a long series of good fortune, began now to take off the mask. This prince, tho' an Arian, had hitherto preserved sentiments of moderation and equity with regard to the Catholics: but fearing, perhaps, that they had a view of overturning his government, he began now to treat them with severity.

Boethius was one of the first that fell a victim to his rigour. He had continued long in favour with his prince, and was
more

more beloved by him than any other person : but neither the remembrance of former affection, nor the absolute certainty the king had of his innocence, prevented him from prosecuting our Philosopher, upon the evidence of three abandoned profligates, infamous for all manner of crimes. The offences laid to his charge, as we are informed in the first book of the Consolation of Philosophy, were, “ That he wished to preserve the
“ Senate and its authority : that he hindered an informer from producing
“ proofs, which would have convicted
“ that assembly of treason : and that he
“ formed a scheme for the restoration of
“ the Roman liberty.” In proof of the last article, the above-mentioned profligates produced letters forged by themselves, which they falsely averred were written by Boethius. For these supposed

crimes, as we learn from the same authority, he was, unheard and undefended, at the distance of five hundred miles, proscribed and condemned to death.—Theodorick, conscious that his severity would be universally blamed, did not at this time carry his sentence fully into execution, but contented himself with confiscating Boethius's effects, with banishing him to Pavia, and confining him to prison.

A. D.
523.

Soon after this, Justin, the Catholick Emperor of the East, finding himself thoroughly established upon the throne, published an edict against the Arians, depriving them of all their churches.—Theodorick was highly offended at this edict. He obliged Pope John I. together with four of the principal Senators of Rome (one of whom was Symmachus, father-in-law to Boethius) to go on an embassy to Constantinople; and commanded them to threaten

A. D.
524.

threaten that he would abolish the Catholick religion throughout Italy, if the Emperor did not immediately revoke his edict against the Arians.—John was received at Constantinople with extraordinary pomp, and treated with profound respect. He tried to compromise matters betwixt the two princes : but so far was he from inducing the Emperor to revoke his edict, that, in compliance with the tenor of it, he reconciled many of the Arian churches to the Catholick Faith.—Theodorick was so incensed at his conduct, and of his associates in this affair, that upon their return he threw them all into prison at Ravenna. Boethius, though entirely innocent of what was done at Constantinople, was at the same time ordered into stricter confinement at Pavia ; the king having probably come to the resolution of proceeding to extremities against him.

Though

Though confined in a doleful prison, and deserted by all the world—though deprived of his library, and stript of all his possessions—our illustrious Philosopher preserved so much vigour and composure of mind, that he wrote, in five books, his excellent treatise of the Consolation of Philosophy. To this treatise our author is more indebted for his fame, than to all his other learned performances. Few books have been more popular: it has gone through a multitude of editions; has been commented upon by many eminent men; has been translated into a great variety of languages; and has been universally acknowledged a work replete with erudition and instruction, and executed with much delicacy and good taste. When we consider the distressed situation of our author when he wrote it, we are filled with wonder that he was capable of composing

posing a performance of so much real genius and merit.

Several of the commentators upon Boethius suppose that he was interrupted, by death, in the execution of this work. Their conjecture is not improbable; as our author, though a zealous Catholick, takes no notice of the comforts arising from the Christian religion to persons in calamitous circumstances; which are far more certain and satisfactory than those derived from Philosophy. They are therefore of opinion, that, if he had lived, he would have added a sixth book to his celebrated treatise; and would have shewn how much superior the topicks of consolation, delivered to us in the New Testament, are to all others. If this was his design, it is much to be regretted that he was not suffered to live till he had accomplished it.

But

27 May,
526.

But the fatal moment was now fast approaching, which put a period to the miseries of Boethius. As a prelude to this, Pope John was famished to death in prison; and soon afterwards Theodorick ordered Symmachus, and the three other Senators that were sent to Constantinople on the embassy before-mentioned, to be beheaded. To compleat his cruelty, he commanded the same punishment to be inflicted on Boethius, in his prison at Pavia, on the 23d of October 526, in the 71st year of his age.—His body was interred by the inhabitants of Pavia, in the church of St. Augustine, near to the steps of the chancel; where his monument * is still

* This monument was erected to his memory by the emperor Otho III. A. D. 996, who ordered Boethius's bones to be taken up, and placed in a shrine of marble upon the top of it.

to be seen, inscribed with the following epitaph, which is not written with much elegance :

Meoniæ et Latiae linguæ clarissimus, et qui
 Consul eram, hic perii, missus in exilium:
 Sed quem mors rapuit, probitas evexit ad auras;
 Et nunc fama viget maxima, vivit opus.

I have thus paraphrased it :

Thrice honour'd with the Consul's office high,
 And deeply skill'd in Greek and Latian lore;
 In exile here by violence must I die;
 And never see my friends and country more?

But Death dissolves nought but my earthly
 frame ;

My soul releas'd shall gain its native seat;
 My learned works shall ever spread my fame,
 And Rome with pride my praises shall repeat.

King

King Theodorick, as we are informed by Procopius, regretted these acts of violence, and did not long survive them. Some months afterwards, when the head of a great fish was served up to him at supper, he imagined he beheld the head of Symmachus fiercely threatening him. Terrified with this apparition, he rose from table, and went to bed in an agony; and after bitterly deploring to his physician his cruelty in respect to Symmachus and Boethius, he became delirious, and in a few days expired.—Amalasuntha, the daughter of Theodorick, who upon the decease of her father governed Italy with singular prudence and justice, as tutress to her son Athalarick, lamented the fate of this eminent man, and expressed the utmost respect for his memory. To make all the atonement in her power for the injuries

injuries her father had done him, she caused his statues, which had been overthrown at Rome during his persecution, to be again erected, and all his possessions to be restored to his heirs.

BOETHIUS:

[illegible]

B O E T H I U S'S

CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY,

B O O K I.

Boethius deplores his misfortunes in a pathetic elegy.

—*Philosophy appears to him.*—*She commands the muses to leave him.*—*Expresses her concern for him.*—*Adduces examples of wise men who had struggled with equal difficulties.*—*Boethius relates to Philosophy his merits.*—*He notifies to her his accusation and banishment.*—*Declares the sanctity and integrity of his life.*—*Laments the loss of his dignities and reputation.*—*Philosophy consoles him.*—*She enquires particularly into the troubles of his mind, and the causes of them.*

IN flower of youth, with love of learning blest,
My verse was wont in cheerful strains to flow;
But now, by Fortune's cruel rage-opprest,
I mourn in numbers suited to my woe.

Boethius
deplores
his mis-
fortunes in
a pathetic
elegy.

B

The

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

The sacred Nine, companions of my grief,
 Their soften'd features wet with many a tear,
 Try all their pleasing art to give relief,
 And whisper verse mellifluous in my ear.

They, faithful friends, still trace my woful ways,
 Regardless of the haughty tyrant's rage,
 Whilom, the glory of my youthful days,
 Now, the chief solace of my drooping age.

Silver'd my hairs, and furrow'd deep my brow,
 Unbrac'd each nerve, tho' scarce beyond my
 prime,
 With rapid haste borne on the wings of wo,
 Old age advances, not on wings of time.

Happy the man, with health and affluence blest,
 Into whose halcyon days intrudes not death;
 From ceaseless wo, still happier who finds rest,
 And yields to fate, long-wish'd, his willing breath.

Death, kind deliv'rer from all grief and pain,
 Why stays thy hand my weeping eyes to close?
 Thy aid, ah cruel! I implore in vain;
 Deaf to my cries, thou wilt not give repose.

With gladd'ning beams, while treach'rous fortune
 shone,
 Disease had almost snatch'd my blifs away,
 With every joy, since now the wanton's flown,
 Why does slow time still lengthen out my day?
 Why

OF PHILOSOPHY.

3

Why did you boast of my exalted state ?

Mistaken friends, were ye not much to blame ?
Learn this *great truth*, from my disastrous fate,
All human bliss is but an empty name.

Whilst I vented my grief in these melancholy strains, and, with tears streaming from my eyes, was committing them to paper, I was struck with the appearance of a woman, whose countenance was altogether august and venerable. Her eyes sparkled with fire, and her look was far more piercing than that of any mortal. Her complexion was comely and healthful, and she seemed to possess all the vigour of youth ; nevertheless her appearance was such as denoted her to have lived many years, and that her existence began long before the present age. The height of her stature could not be determined, as she varied it at pleasure ; now, she seemed to contract herself to the ordinary size of men ; anon, she appeared to reach the skies with her head ; nay, she would at times elevate herself still higher, and penetrate so far into the heavens, as to surmount the reach of the most acute and discerning eye. The stuff of which her robe was composed was indissoluble ; it was of the finest thread, woven with wonderful art, and was the work of her own hands, as I learned from her afterwards. But as smoke and dust obscures ancient pictures, so neglect and the rust of antiquity had rendered the beauty of this

Philosophy
appears to
Boethius.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

stuff scarcely to be discerned. On the lower part of her garment was embroidered in a large and strong character the letter P, on the upper G; the former denoting Philosophy; the latter, God; and betwixt these two letters a flight of stairs was delineated, signifying that the ascent to God was by philosophy *.

This admirable garment, however, had been rent by the fury of some violent men †, who had torn several shreds out of it, and carried them off. Thus did she appear; and to conclude, she held some writings in her right hand, and a scepter in her left.

Philosophy
commands
the Muses
to leave
Boethius.

Beholding the Muses, the inspirers of song, standing round my bed, and lending words to my grief, she was displeased; and looking upon them with a stern and threatening aspect, Who

* In the original, the letter marked on the lower part of the garment is the Greek letter π; on the upper part of it, is the Greek letter Θ. The interpretation I have given of the meaning of these letters being marked on the robe of Philosophy; that the former letter signifies Philosophy, and the latter God, is the most natural, and probably the true meaning. Most of the commentators, however, understand by π the practice of philosophy, and by Θ the theory of it. Theory, say they, is placed in the upper part of the garment, because contemplative philosophy is more noble than practical; and a flight of stairs, they add, is placed betwixt the letters, denoting that students of wisdom ought to ascend to the one, and descend to the other; because there can be no exercise of virtue without a contemplation of truth, nor can there be any useful contemplation of truth without the practice of virtue.

† Those who by prejudice and precipitancy wrest and abuse philosophy, and do neither contemplate truth, nor exercise virtue.

gives

gives permission, says she, to these soul-ener-vating daughters of the theatre, to approach this disconsolate person? So far are they from remedying his woes by any art of theirs, that they nourish them by their soft and enfeebling poisons. It is *they* who teach their votaries to choke and destroy, by the pernicious brambles of the passions, the most abundant and useful crops of reason. They may indeed soothe and indulge the mind in its grief; but they cannot restore it to comfort. If by your deceitful caresses, added she, you had seduced one of the profane, as you are daily wont to do, small would have been my concern: I should not thereby have been injured; for it is only in the sons of wisdom I am interested. But whom do you attack? One who has been trained up from his infancy in the principles of Zeno *

B 3

and

* The Zeno here mentioned was the inventor of logick. He was of Elea, a city of Lucania, and flourished long before the celebrated founder of the Stoicks, of the same name. Boethius might well be said to be trained up in the principles of Zeno, as he was the most profound and expert logician in his time.

The academy whence the academicks were named, was a celebrated gymnasium or place of exercise, in the suburbs of Athens, where the professors of that school used to hold their lectures and public disputations. The founder of it was Plato the disciple of Socrates. Plato's nephew Speusippus, who was left the heir of his school, continued his lectures, as his successors also did in the academy, and preserved the name of academicks; whilst Aristotle, the most eminent of Plato's scholars, retired to another gymnasium called the Lyceum; where, from a custom which he and his followers observed, of teaching and disputing as they walked, they obtained the name of Peripateticks,

or

and the Academy.—Be gone! ye baneful fiends, with your strains that enchant to destruction. Be gone! leave him to me; it is only my sober muse that can effectuate his cure. Struck with these reproaches, the tuneful choir cast down their eyes with respect; and testifying their shame by their glowing cheeks, they immediately left the room, and, filled with sorrow, fled her presence. As for myself, my eyes were blinded by a flood of tears, so that I could not discover who this august dame was, endued with an authority so absolute. I was amazed; with my countenance fixed on the ground, I waited in silence her plea-

or Walking Philosophers. These two sects, though differing in name, agreed generally in things, or in all the principal points of their philosophy: they placed the chief happiness of man in virtue, with a competency of external goods; taught the existence of a God, a providence, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments.

The academicks mentioned above were denominated the disciples of the Old Academy. But Arcesilaus, the fifth master of the Academy from Plato, discarded the systems of his predecessors, and revived the Socratick way, of affirming nothing, and doubting of all things. He and his followers taught, that in all cases men ought to suspend their assent, and content themselves with opinion grounded on probability, which was all that a rational mind had to acquiesce in; but in other matters they generally agreed with their predecessors. This was called the New Academy, in distinction from the Platonic or the Old.

Boethius was a great master of the Greek philosophy, and was perfectly acquainted with the opinions of all the different sects. But his own principles were founded chiefly on those of the Old Academy and the Peripateticks. These were the purest sources to draw from, and this was the philosophy which he had imbibed from his early youth.

The account of the Academy and of the Peripateticks, in this note, is taken from Middleton's *Life of Cicero*, vol. iii. p. 327-8-9.

sure.

OF PHILOSOPHY.

ture. She soon approached, and sat down on the foot of my bed; and beholding my dejected eye, and my face disfigured with grief, she bewailed my wretched condition in the following moving strains:

Ah! hapless state of human race!
How quick do all their pleasures pass!
And too, too weak their minds to bear
Life's varied scenes of woe and care.
When grief's sharp thorn the heart affails,
Of wisdom's sons the purpose fails;
Their boasted vigour soon gives way,
Dark melancholy clouds their day;
The helm no longer reason steers,
But lawless passion domineers.

Too sad a proof of this, alas!

Ah, wretched mortal, is your case!
Whilst undisgrac'd and unconfin'd,
How firm and vigorous was your mind!
Still ranging with unwearied view
Creation's ample circuit thro'.
The sun, refulgent source of day,
You trac'd o'er all his radiant way;
The moon that shines with borrowed light,
And cheers with radiance mild the night,
The silver moon's mysterious round
Was by your magic numbers bound;
The planets too that wand'ring go,
And seem no settled course to know,

Philosophy
expresses
her con-
cern for
Boethius.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Their periods, various and perplex'd,
Were, by your art victorious, fix'd;
Your tow'ring genius could resolve
* What makes the heaven's vast frame revolve,
Whilst all the lights that gild the skies,
In order, daily set and rise;
You too could tell, where nature forms
Her mighty magazines of storms,
Which with impetuous fury roll,
And shake the earth from pole to pole;
Why Spring awakes the genial hours,
And decks th' enamell'd field with flow'rs,
You knew;—and why kind Autumn's hand
Diffuses plenty o'er the land:
Thro' all her mazes you pursued
Coy Nature, and her secrets view'd.
But ah! sad change! that soaring mind
Is now disconsolate and blind;
To earth-born cares a wretched prey,
And all the man is sunk away.
Relentless fate has fix'd those eyes
To earth, that whilom pierc'd the skies.

But it is my business, at present, continued she,
to seek a remedy for you woes, and not to waste
time in fruitless lamentations. Then fixing her
eyes steadily upon me, What, says she, art thou
he who formerly drank of my milk, and fed on

* By this we are to understand the *primum mobile* in the Ptolemean system.

my

my choicest nourishment, and thence derived such firmness and vigour of mind? I furnished you with armour which would have rendered you invincible, if you had not thrown it aside. Do you not know me? Why don't you speak? Is it from shame or insensibility that you are silent? Would to heaven it were a sense of shame that restrained you! But I plainly perceive that it is a benumbing stupor that locks up all your faculties.—When she found that I continued not only silent, but deprived of the power of speech, she applied her hand gently to my breast, and said with a smile, There is not much here to be dreaded; his disease is a lethargy of the mind, the usual effect of violent and disordered passions. He has only forgotten himself; when he perceives me he will awake from this state of oblivion. To enable him to do this, let us softly wipe his eyes, darkened with clouds arising from terrestrial objects. Having thus spoke, she took up the skirt of her robe, and contracting it into a fold, she applied it gently to my eyes, and dried the tears which fell in abundance.

Her touch dispell'd the darkness of my soul *,
 Again mine eyes with wonted vigour roll;
 So,—from the east, when sudden fogs arise,
 And heavy vapours darken all the skies,

* The translation of this metrum was communicated to me by an ingenious friend.

In

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

In shades obscure is hid the solar light,
 On cheerless earth descends the noon-day night :
 If then the north wind, from his Thracian cave,
 Sweep thro' the heavens, and brush along the wave,
 Forth springs the sun with unresisted ray,
 And Nature hails the glad return of day.

The clouds of melancholy being *thus* dispelled, I began to breathe more freely. I lifted up my eyes, and recovered my apprehension so far as to recollect the features of her who had wrought upon me such a sudden cure. I beheld her with attention, and soon discovered her to be *Philosophy*, my dear and antient nurse; in whose *bouse*, and under whose discipline I had been tutored from my very infancy. Ah! says I, beloved mistress of all the virtues, is it you? and have you deigned to descend from heaven to visit me in this doleful mansion, where I am deserted by all the world? Guiltless as you totally are, shall you be involved with me in trouble, and exposed to the false accusations laid to my charge?—Shall I, my beloved pupil, replied she, shall I forsake you? Shall I not bear my share in that load of wo, which the hatred of mankind overwhelms you with, on my account? It would be criminal in *Philosophy* to desert the steps of the worthy man, however unfortunate. And why do you imagine I should be afraid of an accusation, and disturbed with it, as something altogether new? Is it the
 first

first time that Philosophy has been assaulted by the impious? In antient times, and even before the age of my Plato, have I not often contended with the folly and temerity of men? And during the life of that amiable philosopher, did not his master Socrates triumph over an unjust death *, by my assistance? The rout of † Epicureans, Stoicks, and

* The history of Socrates, the most illustrious character for wisdom and virtue in all heathen antiquity, and the manner of his death, is universally known. Erasmus says in one of his dialogues, that he never read the glorious end of Socrates, but he exclaimed, *Sancite Socrates! ora pro nobis*;—O saint Socrates! pray for us.

† Epicurus, the founder of the Epicureans, was of Gargetium in the neighbourhood of Athens. He died about 271 years before the christian æra. The Epicureans held pleasure to be the chief good of man; death the extinction of his being; and placed their happiness consequently in the secure enjoyment of a pleasurable life; esteeming virtue on no other account, than as it was a handmaid to pleasure, and helped to ensure the possession of it, by preserving health and conciliating friends. Their wise man, therefore, had no other duty but to provide for his own ease, to decline all struggles, to retire from public affairs, and to imitate the life of their gods, by passing his days in a calm, contemplative, and undisturbed repose, in the midst of rural shades and pleasant gardens.

Epicurus, by all accounts we have of him, was a very amiable man, calm, temperate, and benevolent: but it must, however, be confessed, that the principles which he taught had a very bad influence upon mankind.

Zeno was the founder of the Stoicks, who took their name from *stoa*, a porch or portico; for it was in a spacious and finely embellished portico in Athens, where they used to meet and dispute. Zeno was born at Citium, a sea-port town in the island of Cyprus, and died at the age of 98, 264 years before the birth of our Saviour.

The Stoicks were the bigots or enthusiasts in philosophy, who held none to be truly wise and good but themselves. They believed in one supreme God, who governed the world, and every thing in it, by his providence; they held fate and predestination, inculcated apathy or freedom

and several other sects, wanted to get immediate possession of the inheritance of this truly divine man; and because I opposed them, and strove against them, they fell upon me as if I had been a part of their prey; tore this robe, which I had woven with my own hands, and going away with shreds of it, they vainly imagined they had obtained possession of me, and of all my treasures. Their rashness was the cause, that others, who were equally ignorant, beholding them clothed with my spoils, were credulous enough to believe that they belonged to me, and were my genuine disciples.

Philosophy adduces examples of wise men who had struggled with difficulties.

But if you are not so well acquainted with the flight of Anaxagoras *, the poisoning of Socrates,

freedom from all passions; placed perfect happiness in virtue, though stripped of every other good; affirmed all sins to be equal, all deviations from right equally wicked; taught that a wise man could never forgive, never be moved by anger, favour or pity, never be deceived, never repent, never change his mind.

The principles of the Stoicks, it must be acknowledged, were too rigorous, and abounded too much with paradoxes. But the best men of antiquity were of this sect, and rendered it very illustrious. Part of the short account of the principles of the Epicureans and Stoicks, in the above note, are taken from Middleton's excellent Life of Cicero, p. 360, 362.

There were several other sects of philosophers among the Greeks, which Boethius here alludes to, but does not particularly mention.

* One of the illustrious philosophers in antiquity: he lived before Socrates, and was of Clazomene in Ionia. He was the disciple of Anaximenes, and applied himself entirely to natural philosophy, and said he was born to contemplate the sun, the moon, and stars. He dwelt long at Athens, but was at length obliged to fly from it, for advancing doctrines contrary to the received opinions in that city.

and

and the torments which Zeno * endured, because these philosophers were not of your own country; you must certainly have a thorough knowledge of the tragical stories of † Canius, of Seneca, and Soranus, whose memory is still so recent, and so much celebrated. The sole cause of whose misfortunes was, that having imbibed my precepts, their manners were incompatible with those of the impious men, who were invested with the supreme power. Be not therefore surprized, if in the ocean of life we should meet with the severest storms, as we propose to ourselves no other end but to displease the wicked; who, though a very numerous tribe, are more to be despised than dreaded; because, having no chief to unite and govern them, they are actuated by the unsteady counsels of Error and Phrenzy. Impelled by their malice, should they attack us with advantage

* The Zeno here mentioned, was the inventor of logick. As he was the chief in a conspiracy to restore liberty to his country, he was, upon the discovery of it, most cruelly tortured by Nearchus, tyrant of Elea.

† Canius was an excellent philosopher; he was condemned to death by the emperor Caligula; and endured it, as Seneca relates, with amazing fortitude. The history of Seneca, the famous philosopher, and tutor of Nero, and the death he underwent, are known to all the world. Barea Soranus was cotemporary with Seneca; he was an eminent philosopher, and a man of the greatest integrity. His virtues were so offensive to Nero, that he was put to death by the tyrant. The expression of Tacitus, concerning him and Thraseas Pætus, is remarkable: "After the murder of so many excellent persons, Nero at last formed a desire of cutting off virtue itself, in the execution of Thraseas Pætus and Barea Soranus."

in

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

in the open field, Reason, our guide, collects her scattered forces, and retires within her ramparts. The wicked, in the mean while, employ themselves in pillaging our useless baggage; but we, little regarding their impotent fury, laugh at them whilst they deprive us of so poor a booty, entrenched as we are in a fortress insurmountable to all the attempts of folly.

The man who triumphs over fate,
Determined is,—in every state;—
Elated not,—with gladdening rays,
When fortune beautifies his days;
And when she's treach'rous, shifts the scene,
Still undejected and serene:
When angry ocean swells and raves,
He scorns its most tempestuous waves;
When earthquakes shake, and thunders roll,
They daunt not his intrepid soul.
Should nature's frame disjointed fly *,
And the whole world in ruins lie,
He unconcern'd the shock would hear,
Nor to his breast admit a fear.

Such vigour marks the truly sage;—
Why fear you then the tyrant's rage?
In virtue wrapt, all cares above,
The wise nor hopes nor fears can move;
Lord of himself, secure he reigns,
Despising prisons, racks and chains.

* In this paraphrase, the translator has had a very celebrated passage of Horace in his view.

But

But hapless he who quits his shield,
 And dastardly resigns the field :
 Wretched the man whose heart gives way,
 And sinks to fear and grief a prey ;
 Do what he lists, fly where he will,
 These baneful passions haunt him still ;
 To break his fetters, and regain
 Sweet peace, his efforts all are vain.

Do these strains affect you ? Do they reach your heart ? Or are you as insensible to them as the ass is to the sound of the lyre * ? You weep ; —why this profusion of tears ? Speak,—conceal nothing—you can expect no assistance from a physician, unless you discover to him your malady. Struck with these words, I recollected somewhat of my long-lost vigour, and thus addressed her. Alas ! why need I enter into a recital of my woes ? With regard to me, is not fortune's unrelenting rage but too apparent ? Are not you struck with the horror of this place ? Do you find here the library, which, in my house, you chose for your residence ? that library, where, blest with your converse, I was taught every science human and divine. Was such my apparel ? Was my countenance such, when with you I was wont to explore the secrets of nature ? when with your compass you described to me the courses of the stars, and taught me, by that order and harmony

* Deaf as the ass to the sound of the lyre, was a Greek proverb.

Boethius
relates to
Philosophy
his merits.

so conspicuous in the heavens, to form my manners and the whole tenour of my life? Is this then all the reward you confer upon your faithful follower?—From the mouth of your Plato, you pronounced this fine saying, “That happy were the states, whose princes were philosophers, or, whose magistrates applied themselves to the study of wisdom*.” Inspired by thee, the same illustrious person recommends it as the indispensable duty of philosophers, to take upon them the management of public affairs, lest the reins of government should fall into the hands of unprincipled profligates, who would thereby become the plague and ruin of every worthy citizen†. Relying upon this authority, I had nothing so much at heart, during my public administration, as to reduce to practice the instructions which I learned from you in our studious retirement. God, who infuses your lessons into the hearts of the truly wise, and you yourself, are conscious, that I brought along with me into the magistracy no other principle, but a generous and impartial zeal for the welfare of the virtuous. Hence I was involved in perpetual and irreconcilable discord with the wicked; but the consciousness of my integrity inspired me with an invariable con-

* This maxim of Plato is taken from the 5th book of his Republic.

† The advice here given to philosophers, to take upon them the direction of public affairs, is to be found in Plato's 6th dialogue, concerning a Republic.

tempt of the resentment of the great, and prompted me resolutely to persevere in supporting the rights of equity. How often have I opposed myself to Conigastus *, when he was oppressing the weak, and bereaving them of their possessions? How often have I put a stop to the iniquitous proceedings of Triquilla, the superintendent of the king's household, and disconcerted his schemes when almost ripe for execution? How frequently have I risked my authority in protecting those unhappy citizens, whom the lawless barbarians had charged with innumerable slanders, in hopes of sharing the plunder of their fortunes? There is no man that can reproach me with deviating from the paths of justice, into those of fraud and oppression. While the provinces were oppressed with private rapine, and the weight of public taxes, I beheld their fate with concern, and grieved no less than the unhappy sufferers themselves. In the time of a severe famine, when the province of Campania was ordered to supply the city of Rome with such a vast quantity of corn as would have intirely ruined it, I entered into a very warm expostulation with the prefect of the palace †, in the presence of the king; and got
C that

* Conigastus was probably a farmer or receiver-general of the taxes.

† The prefect of the palace was originally the captain of the cohorts that attended the emperor as his guard. It became afterwards an office of the highest power and dignity in the empire. To the person invested with it, was committed the administration of justice, the
management

that fine country relieved of the unreasonable burthen. I delivered Paulinus, a worthy consular, from the jaws of the courtiers, who, impelled by avarice and ambition, were like greedy dogs, already devouring him and his great wealth, in their wicked imaginations. In defence of Albinus, another of the consulars, I exposed myself to the resentment of Cyprian, an infamous informer, who had laid a plot to destroy that respectable senator by a false accusation. Is it not then sufficiently manifest, what a load of enmity and bitter resentment I must have incurred? But after all, I thought I had the more reason to expect friendship and support from the rest of mankind; as from my love of justice, I had forfeited all favour at court, and thrown myself out of its protection.

Boethius
notifies his
accusation
and banish-
ment.

But let us see who were my accusers: one Basilus, who was formerly dismissed with infamy from the king's service, and who turned informer against me in hopes of relieving his necessities with my spoils; one Opilio, and one Gaudentius, who, for their innumerable frauds and extortions, were banished by a royal mandate, and who, refusing to submit to this sentence, fled for sanctuary

management of the finances, and the superintendency of the presidents or governors of provinces. King Theodorick, as it is observed in the life of Boethius, p. 5. wisely ruled the Romans, by the same laws, the same polity, and the same magistrates they were accustomed to under the emperors. Hence it was, that for many years they were pleased with his government.

ary to one of the sacred edifices; whereof, when the king was informed, he commanded them, if before a certain day they departed not from Ravenna *, to be seized, stigmatized in the forehead, and driven out of the city. What could be more disgraceful than this intended chastisement? But on the very day it was to be executed, they accused me, and obtained credit enough to get their accusations received and attended to. Wherein, may I ask you, has my conduct deserved this injustice? Was there any shadow of equity in listening to the testimony of three profligates already condemned? If Fortune is not ashamed of the accusation of injured innocence, one would think she might at least blush at the baseness and insatety of its accusers. But you want to be informed of the crime laid to my charge:—I am accused with endeavouring to preserve the senate. But you ask me how? It is said, that I hindered an informer from producing proofs, which would have convicted that assembly of treason. What do you think of this, my dear mistress †? Shall I deny the crime, that

* A city of Italy, upon the coast of the Adriatick, lying to the north of Rome, and distant from it about 200 miles. Several of the later western emperors had fixed their residence in this city, that they might be at hand to restrain the irruptions of the barbarians, who on that side broke into Italy. For the same reason, Theodorick, and his successors the kings of the Goths, and afterwards, the *exarchs*, or governors of Italy under the eastern emperors, continued to make it the seat of government.

† Boethius says this ironically.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

you may not be ashamed of me? No, I freely acknowledge that I had the preservation of the senate always at heart, and that I shall never cease to promote its interest. Shall I therefore confess the charge? But it certainly ought to be my business to embarrass my informers, and not to yield up to them my cause. Shall I own it a crime to wish the safety of that assembly? Its iniquitous decisions with regard to me, gives it indeed the appearance of one. Although, for want of reflection, mankind deceive and impose upon themselves, this does not alter the nature of things. Besides, I do not think it lawful, and I have Socrates's authority for it, either to conceal the truth, or acknowledge a falsehood. With regard to this, however, I submit myself to your judgment, and to the opinions of the wise. At all events, I shall take particular care to transmit a faithful account of the circumstances of my prosecution to posterity, having them rivetted in my memory, and preserved in writing. But why should I spend time, in speaking to you of the forged letters, wherein I am charged with wishing the restoration of Roman liberty? The villainy of this contrivance I could have easily detected, if I had been allowed to have made use of the confessions of my accusers; but this privilege was denied to me, though of the greatest importance to my justification. But alas! are there the smallest
remains

remains of liberty to be hoped for? Would to heaven there were! Then, I would have answered as Canius did, when he was accused by the emperor Caligula, of being acquainted with a conspiracy against his life; "If I had been privy to any such thing," said he to the tyrant, "you should never have known it." But after all, my sorrow and vexation have not deprived me so much of the use of my faculties, as to make me think it strange, that the impious should form attempts against virtue; but what surprizes me above measure, is to behold their attempts crowned with success. To will evil is an effect of our corruption; but to commit it, to oppress innocence with impunity, under the eye of a Deity who *sees* every thing—to me appears a prodigy. Hence it was, that one of your disciples, not improperly, put this question: If there is a God, whence proceeds *evil*? If there is none, whence arises *good*? But though wicked men, who thirst after the blood of the senate, and of all the virtuous citizens whose interests I always vigorously supported, might very naturally wish my destruction; did I deserve such usage from the venerable fathers themselves?

You will undoubtedly remember, you who were always present with me, and directed me in all my words and actions; you will remember, I say, with what entire inattention to my own safety I defended the innocence of the senate at

Boethius declares the sanctity and integrity of his life.

Verona; when the king, desirous of their destruction, endeavoured to transfer the crime of high treason, whereof Albinus was accused, upon the whole of that assembly. You know what I now say to be true, and that I take no delight in extolling myself. For in my opinion, a man who seeks to raise his reputation by vaunting his good deeds, lessens, in some measure, the secret satisfaction that springs from a self-approving conscience. But what have I gained by my integrity? Instead of receiving the recompence of disinterested virtue, I suffer the punishment due to the blackest crime. Was there ever a criminal condemned by judges so unanimously severe, but that in some of their breasts a sense, either of human frailty, or the instability of fortune, to which all are subjected, did not awake sentiments of compassion, and cause them to vary in their verdicts? If I had been accused of meditating to set the sacred temples in flames, of designing to sheathe my impious poignard in the bosoms of the priests, of attempting the lives of all the virtuous and the good; yet I ought to have been present at my trial, nor should any sentence have passed upon me, 'till I had made a confession of my crime, or had been fairly convicted of it. But now, for my zealous affection and attachment to the senate, unheard and undefended, I am, at the distance of five hundred miles, proscribed and condemned to death. O, my judges! well do you deserve that no future patriot should arise
to

to be convicted of the like offence. My accusers themselves, perceiving the splendor of my merit, endeavoured to blacken it, by imputing to me one of the most atrocious crimes, and therefore feigned that I had polluted my conscience with forcery *, in briguing for the consulate. But, my sovereign directress! you can attest the falshood of this reproach; you, who have reigned so long mistress of my breast, and rooted out thence every ignoble sentiment; you know, that it was impossible for me to commit such a crime under your inspection. Daily are you sounding in my ears, and insinuating into my heart, that *golden sentence* of Pythagoras, *Take God for your model*. Should I not then have acted very inconsistently, in seeking assistance from wicked and unlawful arts; when you had exalted my mind to the height of excellence, by forming it into a resemblance of the Deity? Besides, my house, which was as it were the sanctuary of innocence; the society of my friends, all people of the greatest worth; the alliance of my father-in-law Symachus, a man of consummate virtue, and for whom I have a reverence equal almost to that which I bear to yourself—all these considerations ought to have

* The common reading is *sacrilegio*; but some commentators think, with much probability, that the true reading is *fortilegio*; and that the crime which Boethius mentions with so much horror, was forcery, or the practising of magical arts. In the translation I have followed this reading.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

raised me far above the suspicion of such a crime. But, O horrid impiety ! they impute my crime to you ; and I am looked upon as a guilty person because I have been educated under your discipline, and imbibed your morals. Thus, it is not enough, that the reverence due to you has been of no advantage to me ; but you must besides suffer reproach on my account.

Boethius
laments
the loss of
his digni-
ties and re-
putation.

But my miseries are compleat, when I reflect that the majority of mankind attend less to the merit of things, than to their fortuitous event ; and believe that no undertakings are crowned with success, but such as are formed with a prudent foresight. Hence it is, that the unprosperous immediately lose the good opinion of mankind. It would give me pain to relate to you, the rumours that are flying among the people, and the variety of discordant and inconsistent opinions entertained concerning me. This only will I say, that the severest stroke the unfortunate can receive, is the persuasion that they suffer no more than what they deserve. As to what regards myself, as I am now deprived of my possessions, my employments, and my reputation, I look upon the death which awaits me, as a favour. But ah ! methinks I see the numerous band of the wicked, drunk and overflowing with joy, the abandoned race of informers contriving unheard-of villainies, the good dejected and filled with terror at my fate. I figure to myself the
flagitious,

flagitious, daring every crime with impunity; nay, encouraged to perpetrate their abominable deeds by rewards; while the innocent are abandoned, deprived of their security, without protection, and without defence. Wherefore with reason may I thus exclaim:

Author of the starry sky,
Thou, who seated still on high
 On thine everlasting throne,
 Movest all;—unmov'd alone;
Thou, whose laws the stars obey,
 Whirling round their rapid way,
 Shining now with lustre bright,
 Now obscur'd by Cynthia's light,
 As she to the sun retires
 Or more distant meets his fires;
 While, brightest of the dewy throng,
 Vesper leads the choir along,
 And again renews his horn,
 Cheerful messenger of morn.—

Thou, when winter wastes the plain,
 Settest day a short-liv'd reign;
Thou, when summer blazest bright,
 Wingest the slow hours of night;
 Changing seasons as they roll,
 Providence divine extol,
 What—tho' winter's rage deforms,—
 Spring renews the waste of storms,
 Summer ripens Ceres' store,
 Autumn flows with goodness o'er.
 Thro'

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Thro' her wide-extended round
 Nature fast in fate is bound;
 Nothing strays,—but human will,
 (Ah too flexible to ill!)—
 Sovereign Wisdom, why should man
 Trespass thus upon thy plan?
 Blinded, why to reason's ray
 Wanders he from virtue's way?

Why should fortune, fickle dame,
 Ceaseless play her cruel game?
 Deal to worth the doom severe,
 Impious crimes deserve to bear?
 Seat the tyrant on a throne?
 Bend the world beneath his frown?
 Lift the profligate on high,
 Vice abhorr'd to gratify?
 Insolent to tread in dust
 The brave, benévolent, and just?

See fair Virtue stript of all,
 Languishing in want and thrall!
 Lo!—she flies to haunts obscure,
 To rest from violence secure;
 Still she shines serenely great,
 Happy in her calm retreat.
 Crimes, alas! of deepest stain,
 Rapine, perjury profane,
 Fraud in lying colours clad,
 Injure not, nor shame the bad!
 Deep contriving mischief still,
 Ah! they vex the world at will;

Work

Work by wicked arts the fall
Of kings rever'd and lov'd by all!

“ O Thou, who gavest Order birth,
“ Regard the miseries of earth;
“ For man, alas! creation's boast,
“ In fortune's sea is endless tost!
“ Gracious compose each stormy gale,
“ Give his frail bark more smooth to sail:
“ O send that concord and that love
“ To rule below, which rules above!”

When I had vented my grief in these melancholy strains, she, with a countenance serene and unruffled with my complaints, thus addressed me: When I saw you sorrowful and in tears, I immediately knew you were miserable and in exile; but I should not have known how far you were banished from your home, unless I had learned it from yourself. You have not, however, been driven from your country; but you have unhappily wandered from it: or, if you will have it that you have been banished, you have banished yourself; for it was not in the power of any mortal to do you such an injury. Call to your remembrance of what country you are; it is not governed by a multitude as Athens was formerly; but it is ruled by one king, one lord, who, far from banishing his citizens, delights to see them encrease and flourish; it is ruled by a sovereign who is possessed of true liberty, as from the per-

fection

Philosophy
consoles
Boethius.

fection of his nature he is incapable of doing evil, and abhors all unrighteousness. Are you ignorant of that antient law of Rome, by which it is decreed to be unjust to banish any person thence that takes up his residence in it? A law founded upon this principle, that whoever hath obtained the happiness of being settled within the bounds of so noble a city, can never be presumed to deserve the punishment of exile; but if he ceases to desire to be an inhabitant of it, he then ceases to merit that privilege. This place, gloomy as it is, does not therefore move me so much as your melancholy aspect. I am in no pain from the want of your library, whose walls were so richly adorned with glass and ivory; but it is the loss of the composure and tranquillity of your mind that affects me. 'Twas there, 'twas in that precious repository that I stored up, not books, but what gives books their value, the spirit and quintessence of my meditations and writings. As to what you have done for the public advantage, you have told me nothing but the truth; and you have mentioned few particulars in comparison of what you might. With regard to the accusations that have been brought against you, it is universally acknowledged that part of them tend greatly to your honour, while the rest are palpable and malicious falsehoods. You judged right in recounting but slightly, the villainy and base artifices of the informers; as the public, who are sensible

sible of their wickedness, in all its extent, will say much more upon this subject than it becomes you. You have inveighed severely against the unjust decree of the senate. You have vented your affliction because I am involved in your accusation; and you have lamented the prejudice that is thereby done to my doctrines and instructions. You broke forth afterwards in a torrent of grief against fortune, and complained that mankind were not rewarded according to their merits. And at last, hurried away by your dis-tempered muse, you dared to wish that the spirit of peace, which rules in heaven, might rule the earth. But as I behold a crowd of various passions attacking you all at once; as I see you distracted by grief, rage, and melancholy, as this is the state of your mind, it is not now a time to employ violent remedies; we shall at present therefore only apply some agreeable lenitives, whose gentle touch may in some measure mitigate the deep wound that rankles in your heart, and dispose you to receive afterwards medicines stronger and more efficacious.

When Sol, resplendent god of day,
From Cancer darts his scorching ray;
To the parch'd earth who trusts the seed
Can ne'er expect on Ceres gifts to feed.

From

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

From mountains of perpetual snow,
 When Boreas' blasts impetuous blow;
 The lawns and woods the wand'ring swain
 Explores for purple violets in vain.

Let tendrils in the spring escape
 If thou would'st press the juicy grape
 In Autumn, when gay Bacchus pours
 With bounteous hand his soul-enlivening
 stores.

Who governs all, that Power sublime
 To every work a proper time
 Has fix'd; presumptuous then the man
 Who counteracts wise Providence's plan.

Who impious from that order strays,
 And wanders in untrodden ways,
 His toil assiduous with success
 Can never hope a righteous power will bless.

Philosophy
 enquires
 more par-
 ticularly
 into Boe-
 thius's
 troubles,
 and the
 causes of
 them.

First then, allow me, continues she, to ask you a few questions upon the present state of your mind, that I may know in what manner I ought to proceed in your cure. Ask me what you please, replied I, I shall most willingly answer you. Tell me then, says she, do you believe that the affairs of this world are under the direction of blind fortune, or conducted by a wise and rational intelligence? I can by no means believe, answered I, that the beautiful order we every where observe in nature, could proceed from the caprice

caprice and irregularity of chance. I know certainly that God, the creator of the universe, presides over his work. There never was a day of my life, in which I hesitated a moment with regard to the certainty of this comfortable truth. I believe you, says she; for a little while since you declared you were of this opinion, when deploring in your moving verses the unfortunate state of the human race, as alone destitute of the divine care, you allowed that all other things were guided by a rational intelligence. Ah! continued she, I am above measure surprized, that you should despond, when upheld by so comfortable a sentiment! But we must search farther; I am afraid there is some imperfection, some defect in this conviction. Tell me, then, since you have no doubt but that God governs the world, do you know by what œconomy or secret springs he governs it? The meaning of your question, said I, I do not thoroughly comprehend, and therefore cannot return the proper answer. Was I mistaken then, added she, when I told you there was some defect in your sentiment upon this subject? it is by this weak place that these gloomy perturbations, as through a breach, have made way into your breast. But inform me, do you recollect for what end all things were created? or what is the purpose of this amazing frame of nature? I once knew, answered I, but grief has blotted every thing out of my memory.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Do you know, added she, whence all things derive their existence? This I know perfectly, replied I—from God. And how happens it, continued she, that knowing the cause of all things, you should be ignorant of their end? But the nature of these perturbations has ever been such, as to shake and unsettle the minds of men; although not totally to oppress and overpower them. But pray answer me this question: Do you remember you are a man? I am not so distempered, said I, as to forget that. Can you tell me then, says she, what man is? If you ask me whether I know myself to be a rational and mortal creature, I know, replied I, and confess that I am. And do not you perceive, says she, that you are something more? I do not know, answered I, what more I am. I discover now another, added she, and indeed the principal cause of your distemper. You no longer remember what you yourself are. Thus then have I, at the same time, found out the source of your malady, and the method of restoring you to health. For as you have forgotten what you are, you complain of your being banished and stripped of your possessions; as you know not the end and purpose of things, you believe wicked and lawless men are powerful and happy; and as you are ignorant of the œconomy or secret springs by which the world is governed, you imagine that the vicissitudes of life are the work of fortune, and that all human affairs float

at

at random, without the interposition of a supreme Ruler. Imaginations such as these do not only generate diseases of the soul, but if they are indulged, they will utterly ruin it. Give thanks, then, to the preserver of your being, that nature has not totally failed in you. The encouragement I have to expect your cure, is derived from the just notions you entertain in relation to the government of the universe; that it is not left to chance, but is under the direction of God and his providence. Do not despair: this small spark will soon produce heat enough to restore you to life. But as it is not now a proper time to make use of strong remedies, and because such is the nature of the human soul, that no sooner does it throw aside true opinions, but it embraces false: and as hence there arises a mist of gloomy emotions, which darkens the understanding, and gives it a fallacious view of objects; I shall therefore endeavour to dissipate these vapours, by applying soft and gentle fomentations, so that the dark and deceitful illusions of the passions being thus removed, you will rejoice when you behold the splendor of the true light shining in upon your mind.

* When clouds arise
And veil the skies,
Heav'n's shining host
To sight is lost.—

The

* The translation of this metrum was done by my late worthy brother Mr. George Ridpath, minister of Stitchill, and author of the

D

Border

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

The rolling wave
 When tempests heave;
 The glassy main,
 Like skies serene
 Erst pure and bright,
 Now bars the sight;
 So foul the flood
 With boiling mud.—
 The rapid brook
 Which late forsook
 The cloud-top'd hill,
 Its devious rill
 Finds oft withstood,
 By fragments rude
 Loos'd from the rock
 By waste or shock.—
 Then if you'd learn
 Sure to discern
 From false the true,
 And to pursue
 By Reason's light
 The path of right;—
 False joys expel,
 Vain terrors quell,

Border History. Though the version is literal, it expresses the sense of the original very clearly. The short lines are a designed imitation of the numbers of the original; a specimen of which I annex.

Nubibus atris
 Condita nullum
 Fundere possunt
 Sidera lumen.

Hopes

Hopes that delude
And sorrows brood.—
Gross vapours blind,
Strong fetters bind
The wretched soul,
Where *these* controul.

strains, at times cheerful and airy, and anon of a graver and more solemn tone.

The in-
constancy
and caprice
of Fortune.

What is it then, my friend, that has plunged you into such an abyss of sorrow and misery? You have undoubtedly beheld something new and extraordinary. If you think Fortune has changed her behaviour towards you, you are in a mistake. This is the character of the dame; it is her very nature. With respect to you, she has preserved her wonted consistency, being constant in nothing but mutability: such she was, when she caressed you, when she dazzled your eyes with false shews of felicity. You have seen the double face of this blind divinity; and she who veils herself from others, has displayed herself wholly to you. If you approve her manners, conform to them, and do not complain. If you abhor her perfidy, despise it; and treat her with disdain when she is courting you with her dangerous flatteries. What occasions your present melancholy, ought to have been a cause of tranquillity: the wanton has deserted you, of whose continuance no person is secure; and it is now in your power to enjoy a repose that is altogether incompatible with her. Can you then esteem so transient a felicity precious? Is the attendance of Fortune so extremely dear to you, whose stay is so uncertain, and whose removal is followed with such a piercing grief? If it is neither in your power to *detain* her, nor to behold her flight without regret, you ought to look

look upon the presence of this wanderer, in no other view than as a presage of some approaching calamity: for it is not sufficient to consider only the present. Wisdom weighs future events: and the mutability of Fortune, with regard to prosperous and adverse circumstances, is such, that we ought neither to be terrified by her threats, nor delighted with her blandishments. In fine, when you have submitted your neck to her yoke, you ought to bear with patience and equanimity whatever she thinks proper to inflict. Is it not injustice in you, to prescribe the time of stay or removal to a mistress, to whose sovereignty you have voluntarily submitted? and by your impatience, do you not embitter that lot which you cannot possibly change? If you leave your vessel to the winds, you go not as you intend, but where their impulse drives you. If you cultivate a field, you compensate years that are barren with those that are fruitful. You have subjected yourself to the dominion of Fortune; it becomes you, then, as an humble subject, to obey her laws. What! would you stop the rolling of her wheel? Ah! foolish mortal! do you not see, that if Fortune were permanent she would cease to exist?

Inconstant as the winds or wat'ry main,

The cruel wanton * shifts the scenes of fate;

She blasts the glory of the conqueror's reign,

And lifts the captive from his humble state.

* Fortune.

D 4

The

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

The haughty dame with a malicious joy
 Deals woe around, and ne'er repents of ill;
 Her ears still deaf to mis'ry's piercing cry,
 To sorrow's tears her eye unpitying still.

Capricious thus she sports, and boasts her power,
 Her highest joy with happiness to crown
 Her vot'ries blind, then sudden the next hour
 To deep despair to hurl them headlong down.

Philosophy
 expostu-
 lates with
 Boethius
 in the name
 of Fortune.

But allow me to personate Fortune for a few moments, and to expostulate with you in her name; in the mean while attend, and you'll acknowledge the justice of these expostulations.—Why, my friend, do you thus daily accuse me, and pour forth such bitter complaints against me? What injury have I done you? Of what possessions that were really yours, have I deprived you? Contend with me before what judge you please, upon your title to possess wealth and honours; and if you can prove that any person ever had a fixed property in these things, I shall most willingly grant, what you so earnestly desire to recover, did formerly belong to you. When nature brought you into the world, from the womb of your mother, I received you naked and in want of every thing; I cherished you, I supported you; and what is now the cause of your animosity against me? I educated you with too much favour and indulgence; I bestowed upon you affluence, I surrounded you with splendor, and heaped upon

upon you all my blessings. It is now my will to resume what I lent: be thankful then for the enjoyment you have had, of what was not your own. You have no cause to complain, for you have lost nothing to which you had a just title. Why then do you mourn? I have done you no wrong: riches, honours, and all other things of that nature, are subject to me, and in my power: they acknowledge me as their mistress; with me they come; and when I depart, they follow. Boldly may I venture to affirm, that if the things, the want whereof you so feelingly lament, had been your own, you could by no means have lost them. Shall I alone be denied the liberty of exercising my rights? Doth not heaven gild the face of nature with the brightest days, and obscure it with the most gloomy nights? Do not the seasons adorn the earth with a profusion of fruits and flowers, and in their progress ravage and deform it by rains, and snows, and tempests? Doth not the sea now entice us with its placid and flattering aspect, and anon terrify us with the rage of its vast and tumultuous billows? And shall I, shall I alone, to gratify the insatiable desires of men, preserve a constancy opposite to my character? Behold my powers! observe my perpetual amusement! I turn my rolling wheel with rapidity; and please myself with exalting what was low, and with bringing down what was high. Mount up upon it then; but upon this condition, that you do

do not complain, if I pull you down whenever my sportive humour shall prompt me to do it. Are you still unacquainted with my frolicksome genius, and with the strange vicissitudes of which I am the cause? Do you not know, that * Cræsus king of Lydia, formerly so rich, and so formidable to Cyrus, was dragged to the funeral pile, and must have perished miserably in the flames, had he not been preserved by an abundant shower from heaven? Do you not remember that † Paulus Æmilius shed generous tears over the misfortunes of king Perseus, whom he had defeated and taken prisoner? And what else doth the weeping muse of Tragedy deplore, but the flourishing state of

* Cræsus king of Lydia, so remarkable for his riches and prosperity, asked Solon, the famous Athenian philosopher and legislator, who visited him at Sardis, who was the happiest man? Solon named several; but Cræsus appearing surprized that he himself was not mentioned as one of them, Solon told him, no man could be said to be happy before death: the truth of which Cræsus afterwards experienced; for being defeated and taken prisoner by Cyrus, he was condemned to be burnt, and while Cyrus's attendants were placing him upon the funeral pile, he cried out, Solon, Solon, Solon! Cyrus asked why he did this: and when Cræsus informed him of Solon's saying, struck with the mutability of Fortune, and inspired with sentiments of humanity, Cyrus took compassion upon Cræsus, and ordered the pile to be extinguished; which order could not have been executed, unless a very plentiful shower had at that very time fallen from the heavens. It is farther related, that Cyrus not only saved Cræsus's life, but treated him ever afterwards with great humanity and respect.

† The instability of Fortune was experienced very bitterly by Paulus Æmilius. During the rejoicings of his pompous triumphs over king Perseus, two of his sons, very accomplished young noblemen, died.

kingdoms

kingdoms overwhelmed by the indiscriminating strokes of Fortune? Did you not learn whilst a youth, that at the gates of Jupiter's palace stand two large vessels, one full of blessings, the other of woes. What if you have drunk too deep of the first vessel? What if I have not totally forsaken you? Is there not in the mutability of my temper a just foundation for your hoping a more prosperous lot?—For all these reasons, you ought not to sink under affliction. But, as you are placed in a state in common with mankind, you should not desire to be exempted from the laws of humanity, and to live as you list.

Tho' Plenty, from her teeming horn,
Of wealth should pour her copious stores,
Profuse as dew-drops of the morn,
Or sands upon the briny shores;

His heaps still wanting to increase,
Rapacious, thankless man, complains;
Nor can enjoy his soul in peace,
Till power and honours he obtains.

Tho' Heav'n, indulgent to his pray'rs,
Tries to content each fond desire,
And every boon he asks confers,
His daring wishes still aspire.

Nought can the impious wretch suffice;
He deems his envied fortune poor,
Nor ceases yet to vex the skies,
But thirsts and wildly gapes for more.

What

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

What reins can man's desires controul?

His furious av'rice what restrain?

To cool the fever of his soul

Heav'n's boundless bounty flows in vain.

Unhappy, tho' with plenty blest,

The wretch distracted with vain fears

Of fancied want;—this cruel pest

His bosom like a vulture tears.

If Fortune should interrogate you in this manner, you would certainly have nothing to answer. But if you have any thing to offer in defence of your complaints, speak out; you have full liberty.—What you have been saying, replied I, is indeed very specious, and is adorned with all the sweet and captivating charms of Rhetorick and Music; but alas! such discourses affect no longer than they strike the ear; they cannot reach the heart, and efface the deep impressions that misery there has made. For in that moment when your delightful words shall cease to sound in my ears, my deep-rooted melancholy will recur, and afflict me as much as it did formerly.—I believe so, said she; for the arguments I have been using, are not designed as remedies, but as lenitives only, to allay in some measure that obstinate grief which refuses to be cured; but when I judge it proper, I shall administer medicines more effectual, which will reach to the seat of your distemper.

In

In the mean while, that you may not consider yourself the most miserable of men, tell me, have you forgotten your former incomparable felicity? I shall not speak of your happiness, when deprived of your parents, in falling under the care of the chief and most respectable men of the city; nor of your engaging the affections and esteem of those worthy personages; nor of your being afterwards honoured with their affinity; though there were none who did not then consider you the happiest of men, blest as you were with the splendid alliance of such fathers-in-law, with such an amiable and virtuous consort, and with sons of the most distinguished merit *. I shall forbear also to mention (for to what purpose is it to speak of things that ordinarily happen?) those honourable employments which were denied to age, and conferred upon you in your youth; for I am impatient to recall to your remembrance that singular event, which exalted you to the height of human felicity, to the very summit of bliss, if there is such a thing as bliss below. Is there any succession of calamities capable of obliterating the *memory of that day*, when you saw your two sons, invested with the dignity of consuls, issue from your

Philosophy shews Boethius that he is not miserable, but possessed of much felicity.

* Boethius's fathers-in-law were Festus and Symmachus. Rusticana, his second wife, the daughter of Symmachus, was the person here mentioned. And Patritius and Hypatius, his sons by his first wife Elpis, who were consuls about the year 500, are the sons here spoken of.

own house in a chariot, attended by a venerable body of senators, and followed with the acclamations of a numerous populace? *of that day*, when you beheld them seated on high in their curule chairs in the senate-house, where you displayed your genius in delivering a fine periegrick upon the king *, and deserved the crown of eloquence? *of that day*, when, to crown the glories of it, you placed yourself in the circus betwixt your consul-sons †, and dispensed to a crowded and joyful assembly of the people, a triumphal largess, equal to their most enlarged expectations? Then it was, while Fortune was careffing and fondling you as her darling, you, in my opinion, fairly over-reached and got the better of her, by wresting from her a felicity which never before fell to the share of any private person. Have you the assurance then to call Fortune to an account? She now begins, I own, to throw an unkind eye upon you; but if you im-

* King Theodorick was then in Rome; and, as it is related in the life of Boethius, answered this speech in the most obliging terms, and promised never to encroach upon any of the privileges of the senate.

† The king also repaired to the circus, and made a speech to the people, wherein he expressed his sincere desire of their welfare and prosperity, confirmed the privileges they had enjoyed under the emperors his predecessors, and assured them of his protection. Boethius, it is said, dispensed to the people, upon this occasion, a triumphal largess, *i. e.* such a liberal largess as was given upon days of triumph. [The largess was a gift in corn and money, so much to every man.] It is also related, that Theodorick bestowed at this time a very liberal ~~donative~~ upon the people.

partially weigh your comforts and afflictions, you cannot deny but you are still happy. If you think yourself miserable, because the blessings you formerly enjoyed have taken their flight, you ought to consider, that the evils you suffer are also transitory and upon the wing. Are you still so inexperienced, and like a stranger newly introduced upon the theatre of the world? Can you suppose that there is any stability in human affairs, when the life of man is exposed to dissolution every hour? Though the constancy of Fortune is not to be [relied upon, yet, if it were, the last day of life puts a period to all sublunary enjoyments. What then is the mighty matter whether you die away from them, or they fly away from you?

* When Phœbus breaks thro' dawning day,
 In all his glories bright,
 The stars diminish'd die away
 Before his flaming light.

When gentle Zephyr paints the green,
 And roses deck the glade;
 An eastern blast deforms the scene,
 And all its glories fade.

* This metrum was translated, at my desire, by the same ingenious friend who furnished me with a version of metrum 2, Book I. It is very finely executed.

Now

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Now calmly smooth, a shining plain
 Old Ocean's surface lies,
 Now blustering storms assault the main,
 And raging billows rise.

If Nature change each circling hour,
 If nought can fix'd abide,

Go,—fondly trust in tottering pow'r!
 In winged wealth confide!

In this confide, this maxim know
 Thro' Nature's various range,
 That all things alter here below,
 And nothing's sure but change!

O parent of every virtue! replied I, you recall to my memory nothing but what is true, nor can I deny but that the gales of prosperity blew early upon me. But this is the very thing that consumes me with vexation; for, in every reverse of fortune, it is the remembrance of former happiness, that gives the most distressing wound. —But as your present sufferings, said she, arise wholly from your false opinion of things, they ought not to be imputed to the evil state of your affairs. For if the empty name of a fluctuating happiness still captivates you; do but recollect what a large portion of the gifts of Fortune is still yours. If I can make it appear, that what you esteemed as most precious in your happy days, is still, by the particular indulgence of Heaven, preserved inviolable; how can you, enjoying such
 ineffimable

inestimable blessings, complain with justice of the injuries of Fortune? *Symmachus, your father-in-law, that ornament of human nature, whose welfare you would purchase at the expence of life, is safe and in health; and that incomparable man, whom Wisdom and Virtue call their own, is so much moved with your misfortunes, that he is regardless of himself, and the dangers that surround him. Your spouse is also alive †, a woman equally amiable for the sweetness of her dispositions and the purity of her manners, and, to say all in a word, a true resemblance of her father; she, I would have you to remember, still lives; but what even I must allow is an alloy to your happiness, her separation from you dissolves her in tears, and consumes her with grief, inso-much, that she is weary of life, and preserves it

* Quintus Aurelius Symmachus was prefect of Rome and consul in the year 522, having his son-in-law Boethius, who had been twice consul before, for his colleague. Symmachus was the first man in the senate for probity, knowledge, experience, and wisdom. He was at liberty, when Boethius wrote the Consolation of Philosophy in prison, but he was soon afterwards imprisoned at Ravenna, along with pope John I. The pope was thrown into a low dungeon, and famished to death. Symmachus had the fate of his son-in-law; he was beheaded in the year 526. See Life of Boethius, p. 23, 26.

† Rusticiana, daughter of Symmachus. This lady survived her father and husband a long time. She was alive when Totila, king of the Goths, took Rome in the year 541, and gave the pillage of it to his soldiers. The Goths left the inhabitants nothing. Historians relate, that the principal ladies of that famous city, and among others, the widow of Boethius, were obliged to beg their bread at the doors of the Barbarians.

E

only

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

only for your sake. Why need I mention your consular sons *, who display in their youth the most eminent talents, and promise to be in every respect worthy of their sire and grandfire?—The principal care of man is to preserve his life; and if you but know your felicity, you are still happy in the possession of blessings which all men esteem dearer than life. Wipe away therefore your tears. Fortune has not wreaked all her malice against you; the tempest you have suffered is inconsiderable, whilst your anchors hold firm, which afford both present consolation and future hope.—It shall be my constant prayer, replied I, that these anchors may never fail me; for so long as they remain, however things go, I shall escape shipwreck. But do you not perceive that I am divested of my honours, and plunged in disgrace?—I should have imagined, said my kind instructress, that I had made some progress in your cure, if I did not see you repining at your fate; but it grieves me to behold you in possession of such comforts, and to hear you lament so bitterly that something is wanting to your felicity; for is there any mortal so completely happy, that he has not cause, in

* These were his sons Symmachus and Boethius, by Rusticiana. The appellation Consular was given to them, not that they were consuls themselves, but that they were descended from a father who was consul. Some writers imagine that these young noblemen were consuls in the year 522, and upon that account are here called consulars: but this is a mistake; for their father and grandfather were, as is before related, consuls for that year.

some

OF PHILOSOPHY.

some respect, to complain of his condition? The enjoyments of life have this uneasiness ever accompanying them, that they neither equal our desires, nor is our possession of them secure. One man has riches in abundance, but his birth is obscure: another is conspicuous for the nobility of his descent, but as he is surrounded with indigence, he wishes to be unknown: a third is blest with both advantages, but laments his living unmarried: this man again is happy in a wife, but bewails the loss of children, and the necessity he is under of leaving his fortune to distant heirs: whilst that other man rejoices that he is the parent of a numerous family, but is soon overwhelmed with shame, upon account of their profligate behaviour. Hence it is, that there is scarce any man who is completely satisfied with his condition; for in every situation of life there is something disgusting, which a person does not feel till he has had experience of it, but which he soon discovers upon a trial. Add to this, that a man flowing in prosperity has a most delicate sensibility*; and that, unless all things succeed to

E 2

his

* Prosperity, says Doctor Blair, in his very accurate and elegant sermons, vol. I. p. 186, debilitates instead of strengthening the mind. Its most common effect is, to create an extreme sensibility to the slightest wound. It fomented impatient desires, and raises expectations which no success can satisfy. It fosters a false delicacy, which sickens in the midst of indulgence. By repeated gratification, it blunts the feelings of men to what is pleasing, and leaves them unhappily acute to whatever is uneasy. Hence, the gale which another would

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

his wish, as he is unacquainted with adversity, he is overturned by the smallest reverse of fortune; the slightest accident being sufficient to damp his enjoyments, and involve him in misery. Do not you perceive that numbers of the human race would think themselves almost exalted to heaven, were they but possessed of a small portion of the wrecks of your fortune? This place, which you call a banishment, is to its inhabitants their beloved country. Nothing is the cause of misery, but what is considered as such; and every lot is happy to a person who bears it with tranquillity. Who, I pray you, is so blest, but, if he gives reins to impatience, desires to change his condition? With what bitter ingredients is human happiness allayed! for when it is such as men are delighted with, it cannot be retained, but takes its flight at pleasure. Hence therefore appears the uncomfortable nature of all worldly prosperity; since with regard to those that enjoy it with equanimity, it has no permanency; and with respect to a person of delicate feelings, it is always defective and incomplete. Why, therefore, O mortals! do ye search abroad for happiness? when it is only to be found at home in your own breasts. You are the dupes of error and of ignorance. I will shew you in a few words in

would scarcely feel, is to the prosperous a rude tempest. Hence, the rose-leaf doubled below them on the couch, as is told of the effeminate Sybarite, breaks their rest.

what

what the chief happiness consists.—Is there any thing more precious to you than yourself? Nothing, you will say. Assume then the government of yourself, and you will possess what you can never lose, and what Fortune cannot take from you.

But to be fully convinced that happiness consists not in things which are in the power of Fortune, attend to the following reasoning:—If happiness is the chief good of a reasonable being, that cannot be his chief good, which is in its nature fluctuating, and of which he may be deprived; for there is some good more excellent than this transitory felicity, namely, what is permanent, and which cannot be taken away: it is therefore evident, that Fortune, the most variable thing in the world, cannot bestow the sovereign good upon mankind. Besides, whoever is captivated with the favours of the capricious dame, either knows, or does not know her inconstancy. If he does not know it, what happiness can a person enjoy, who is immersed in the grossest ignorance? If he knows it, he must be afraid of losing her gifts, as he is sure they may be lost; and the fear of this will keep him in constant terror, and bereave him of repose. But perhaps he may think the favours of Fortune despicable, and if he should be deprived of them, unworthy of his concern: if this is the case, it must be a very inconsiderable good, the loss whereof can be supported without

Happiness
doth not
consist in
the gifts of
Fortune.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

regret. But as I am satisfied that you are convinced of the soul's immortality, by a number of incontestable proofs; and since it is evident that the felicity of the body ends with life *, it unquestionably follows, that when men lose this felicity, they must be plunged in misery. Nevertheless, as we know that many of the human race have sought the enjoyment of happiness, not only by death, but by sufferings and torments; how can this present life make men happy, since, when finished, it does not make them miserable?

Would you a mansion firm and sure
Prepare, where you may rest secure,
Scorning each blast that idly raves,
Despising Neptune's swelling waves; *
Build not upon the mountain's brow,
Tho' every prospect charms below;
Nor, pleas'd to hear old Ocean roar,
Fix not too near the sandy shore.—
On high,—your airy fabrick plac'd,
By every rattling storm's defac'd;
And if you found on treach'rous sand,
Your superstructure shall not stand.

Convenience to delight prefer;
In search of pleasure oft we err.
Go—then in some calm vale's retreat,
Firm on a rock erect your seat;

* If the happiness of man consists only in the felicity of the body, and a period is put to this felicity by death; man, if he continues afterwards to exist, must necessarily be miserable.

OF PHILOSOPHY.

39

Th' impetuous winds that vex the main,
And savage hills,—your shelter'd scene
Annoy not ;—there, compos'd to ease,
Content becalms your happy days,
While all the noise the tempests keep,
Serves but to sooth your balmy sleep.

But as I perceive, continued she, that the le-
nitivè and palliating reasonings I have employed,
have begun to insinuate themselves into your
heart, I think you are now prepared to receive com-
fort from arguments more powerful and effectual ;
let me therefore beg your attention :—Were the
gifts of Fortune not even so fading and momentary
as they are, what is there in them, I pray you, to
constitute your happiness ? Do they contain any
thing, when closely examined, but what ought to
render them despicable in your sight ? Are riches
precious in themselves, or only in the estimation
of men ? Which is most precious in them ? the
quantity or the quality ? But does not a man ac-
quire more lustre by spending than by hoarding
them ? as avarice is always odious, and liberality
praise-worthy : and if that which is transferred
to another, cannot remain in our hands, then
certainly money never can be precious and estima-
ble, but when, by spending it, we transfer it to
others, and it ceases to be ours. But if all the
money in the world were accumulated into the
coffers of one man, would not every one else be

Happiness
not to be
found in
riches.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

in want of it? The sound of a voice, without suffering any alteration, fills the ears of many at the same time; but this is not the case with riches, which cannot be dispersed among multitudes without being diminished, and rendering indigent those to whom it formerly belonged. O riches! how limited and deficient is your boasted value! You cannot be enjoyed by many at the same time, nor can you be heaped up by one without impoverishing others. But say, doth the splendor of jewels dazzle your eyes? If there is any thing valuable in their lustre, it is the property of the stones themselves, and not of their admirers: I am therefore greatly surprized that mankind are so very much captivated with them. For what can there be in any thing destitute of motion, life, and reason, that can justly attract the regard of creatures endowed with life and reason? Precious stones are indeed the workmanship of the Creator, and amid the variety of his works they are deservedly distinguished for their beauty; but as their beauty is infinitely below the excellence of your nature, they are by no means worthy of your supreme admiration and desire.—Does not the prospect of a fine country delight you? Why should it not? for it is really a beautiful part of a most beautiful whole. Hence we contemplate with pleasure, a calm and serene sea; hence we admire the heavens, the stars, the sun and the moon.—But have you any property
in

in these magnificent existences? Have you the presumption to glorify yourself in their splendor? Do the vernal flowers adorn you with their variety? or, doth your fruitfulness burst forth in the profusion of summer fruits? Why do you suffer yourself to be hurried away by empty delusions? Why do you place your happiness in things external? as Fortune can never make those enjoyments yours, where, in the nature of things, you have no property.—The fruits of the earth are undoubtedly designed for the support of animals: but if you want only to supply the necessities of nature, the affluence which Fortune bestows will be useless; for Nature contents herself with little, and if you heap upon her more than she demands, the superfluity will be both disagreeable and hurtful.—Again, do you imagine it adds any thing to a man's worth to shine in magnificent robes? If there are in these any thing to be admired, it is only the beauty of the stuff, or the ingenuity of the workman.—Once more—Can you think it a happiness to be followed by a numerous train of domestics? They are a set of profligates, they are dangerous furniture in a house, and extremely hurtful to the master: but if they are men of worth, what title have you to reckon the probity of others a part of your riches?

Upon the whole, then, it plainly appears, that none of the enjoyments which you considered as your own, did ever properly belong to you: but
if

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

If there is no intrinsic worth in these matters to render them desirable, why do you rejoice in the possession of them, or afflict yourself for their loss? If they derive a beauty from nature, what relation has that to you? For in that case, from their own beauty, they would be equally agreeable whether they were yours or not. It is not, therefore, because they are a part of your property, that they are precious; it is only because they appeared precious to you, that you desired to number them among your possessions. — Why then are you so clamorous in your demands upon Fortune? You want, you say, to drive away indigence by abundance; but the very reverse of this happens, for great care and much assistance is requisite to preserve a variety of valuable goods: and it is a certain truth, that none have a greater number of wants than those who have the largest possessions; whilst, on the contrary, none are less indigent than such as measure their abundance by the necessities of nature, and not by the superfluity of their desires. Is there then no real happiness to be found within your breast, which you may justly call your own, that you are obliged to search for it in things foreign and external? How strangely is the order of nature inverted, that a being, who from the faculty of reason resembles the Divinity, should, in his own estimation, have no other worth or excellence but what he derives from the possession of inanimate objects! — Inferior

rior animals are content with their endowments; you only, whom intelligence renders like to the Deity, vainly seek to adorn your exalted nature with things that are infinitely below you, not perceiving by such a behaviour, how much you dishonour your Creator. His will it was, that mankind should excel all terrestrial creatures; but so greatly do you debase your dignity, that you degrade yourselves below the most contemptible of them: for if the glittering vanities, reckoned precious by men, are esteemed of more value than the persons to whom they belong; when therefore you place your happiness upon such despicable trifles, do you not thereby acknowledge yourself of less worth than these trifles? and well do you merit to be so esteemed. Such, I would have you to remember, is the nature of man, that he then only excels all other beings, when he knows himself; but when he ceases to do this, he sinks below beasts: for ignorance of themselves is natural to brutes, but in men it is unnatural and criminal. How great then, and how apparent is your mistake, in believing that any thing which is so foreign to your nature, can be an ornament to it? I again assure you, that this cannot be true; for if a thing appears beautiful from its external artificial embellishments, we admire and commend those embellishments alone, whilst we still look upon the thing itself as de-

2

formed

formed or insignificant *. Moreover, I deny that to be a good, which is hurtful to him that possesses it. Is not this true? Undoubtedly, you will answer me. But riches are often hurtful to those who have acquired them; for every wicked man is desirous of another's wealth, and thinks that he alone ought to engross all the gold and jewels in the world. You, therefore, who so much dread the instruments of assassination, if you had entered upon the stage of life, as a poor way-faring man, you might have carelessly pursued your journey, and boldly sung in the face of robbers, Justly therefore may I exclaim, O the transcendent felicity of riches! No sooner have you acquired them, but you cease to be secure, and bid farewell to tranquillity!

Thrice happy they in days of old
 Who liv'd—it was an age of gold;
 Content, with what the bounteous soil
 Bestow'd abundant, without toil,
 Ere baneful luxury began
 To mix the poison'd cup of man,

* As when you see a viper, or an asp, or a scorpion, in an ivory or gold box, you do not love it, or think it happy, on account of the magnificence of the materials in which it is enclosed; but shun and detest it, because it is of a pernicious nature: so likewise, when you see vice lodged in the midst of wealth, and the swelling pride of fortune, be not struck with the splendor of the materials with which it is surrounded, but despise the base alloy of its manners.

Epictetus, Fragment 17. Mrs. Carter's translation.

Ripe

Ripe fruits and herbs his wholesome food
 Supplied,—nor thirsted he for blood;—
 On hills securely fed the flocks,
 Safe in the pastures graz'd the ox.—
 The painful bee's ambrosial dew,
 That healthful precious balm he knew :
 But knew not, from the juicy vine,
 To draw the dangerous charms of wine.
 To shine in splendid dress admir'd,
 He, unambitious, ne'er aspir'd;
 The Tyrian dyes were unreveal'd,
 The diamond's lustre lay conceal'd.
 Serenely pleasant pass'd his days,
 His wants were few,—and serv'd with ease :
 The flow'ry lawn—his fragrant bed,
 The zeyhyrs bland—his slumbers fed,
 The purling stream's translucent wave
 Delightful beverage to him gave ;
 The shadowy pine a cool retreat
 Afforded, from the noon-tide heat.

Fir'd with insatiate thirst of gain,
 No bold advent'urers plow'd the main,
 And madly tempted untried shores,
 By commerce to encrease their stores.

The martial trumpet's loud alarms
 Rous'd not these sons of peace to arms;
 Unskill'd in war's detested trade,
 In purple gore the shining blade
 They dyed not, nor the thirsty plain
 Strow'd with the wounded and the slain.

For

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

For what could stimulate their rage
 In impious battles to engage,
 When death, or many a gaping wound,
 Was all the meed that valour crown'd ?

O could we see those golden times,
 So guiltless, so averse from crimes,
 Return, and bless the earth again !—
 But that fond wish, alas, how vain !

Man's thirst of wealth what can assuage ?
 Not Etna's fires more fiercely rage.—
 Curs'd be the wretch who op'd the mine,
 And gave the flaming gold to shine ;
 Th' unnumber'd ills that vex the earth,
 To that dire mischief owe their birth.

Happiness
 not to be
 found in
 power and
 honours.

Why should I discourse of power and of honours, which, though you are ignorant of true honour and of real power, you extol to the skies? When these favours of Fortune fall to the share of an abandon'd profligate, what flaming eruptions of Etna, what impetuous deluge did ever produce greater calamities? No doubt you have heard that your ancestors formed a design to abolish the consular government (tho' with the consulship their liberty commenced), on account of the insolence of these magistrates; as they formerly suppressed the title and office of king, because of the tyranny of their monarchs. But if sometimes, though seldom, it happens, that honours are conferred upon men of worth; is there any thing estimable

estimable in them, but the probity of the persons invested with them? Hence it is, that virtue is not embellished by dignities, but on the contrary, dignities derive all their lustre from virtue. But in what respects, I pray you, is power so excellent and so desirable? Do but consider, O ye weak and despicable animals! what they are, over whom you appear to exercise authority, and what you are, who thus seem to govern? If you observed a mouse assuming command over her equals, would not you be ready to burst with laughter? But what is there in nature so weak as the human frame? The bite of an insect, the most inconsiderable reptile insinuating itself into the human pores, may be the cause of death. But how can any man obtain dominion over another, unless it be over his body, or what is inferior to his body, I mean, his possessions? Can you ever command a free-born soul? Can you ever disturb the tranquillity of a mind collected in itself, and resolutely exerting its powers? An imperious prince imagining he might, by tortures, extort a confession of his accomplices in a conspiracy, from a person of determined spirit *, the undaunted man bit off his tongue, and spit it in the face of his enraged enemy: thus did he at once disappoint the views of the tyrant, and render the cruelties prepared for him,

* The person here spoken of was probably Zeno, inventor of logic, mentioned in a former note; and the tyrant alluded to, Nearchus of Elea, against whom Zeno had formed a conspiracy.

matter of triumph to his own heroic virtue. Besides, what is it that one man can do to another, which may not be retaliated upon the aggressor?

* Busris, who we are told was wont to kill his guests, was himself slaughtered by Hercules his guest. Regulus † put in chains many prisoners of war, whom he took from the Carthaginians; but he was soon after obliged to submit to the chains of his victorious enemies. Is the power then of that man, do you think, of any importance, who dares not inflict what he intends upon another, lest his intended severities may be requited upon himself? Besides, I would have you to reflect, that if there were any thing really and intrinsically good in power and honours, they could never devolve upon the wicked; for an union of things that are opposite, is repugnant to nature. But as we frequently see the worst men obtaining the highest honours; it is evident that honours are not in themselves good, otherwise they would not fall to the share of the unworthy. The same holds true, with regard to all the gifts of Fortune, which are commonly showered down in profusion upon the least deserving. We ought here also to consider, that as none doubts of the

* Busris, king of Egypt, a cruel tyrant, is said to have been the son of Neptune and of Lybia. He used to sacrifice strangers to Jupiter; but whilst he was preparing to put Hercules to death in this manner, Hercules overcame him, and sacrificed both him and his son to Jupiter upon the same altar.

† The history of Regulus, the famous Roman consul, is universally known.

strength

strength of a man, who has given instances of his strength, nor of his swiftness who runs well; in like manner it is admitted that the knowledge of music makes a musician, of medicine a physician, and of rhetorick a rhetorician. For the nature of a thing consists in doing what is peculiar to itself, in not mixing its effects with things of opposite qualities, and in voluntarily repelling what is repugnant or hurtful to it. Now, we never see riches satisfy the restless cravings of avarice, nor power render master of himself the man whose opprobrious vices keep him bound in indissoluble chains; neither do we perceive that when honours are conferred on the unworthy, they are thereby rendered men of worth: on the contrary, dignities serve only to betray them, and to expose their want of merit. But for what reason does all this happen? 'Tis because you take a pleasure in giving false names to things; names contrary to their natures, and inconsistent with their effects: thus you dignify riches, power, and honours with names they have no title to. In fine, we may say the same of all the favours of Fortune: we may truly conclude, that she has nothing to bestow that is really desirable, nothing that is naturally good; that she is not inseparably attached to men of merit, and that she does not render virtuous those to whom she adheres.

Nero, that dreaded monster's crimes
 Shall live abhorr'd till latest times;
 Who, when he burn'd imperial Rome,
 In sportive strains bewail'd her doom:
 Who madly rioted in blood
 Of conscript fathers wife and good;
 And smote with unrelenting rage
 * His brother, darling of the age.
 Dreadful to tell,—but ah too true!
 His impious hands his mother slew;
 Pale at his feet, the savage bear
 Her corse beheld without a tear;
 Her polished frame he curious spied,
 And every fine proportion eyed;
 And said with a disdainful air,
 He never thought her half so fair.

Yet with unlimited command
 This parricide ruled every land,
 Which Sol, resplendent God of day,
 Rejoices with enlivening ray,
 Bright issuing from the purple east,
 Serene descending in the west:
 The frozen regions of the pole
 Were bended too, to his control:
 Beneath the line the swarthy train
 Bewail'd the horrors of his reign.—

* Boethius means Britannicus. Nero was Britannicus's brother only by adoption. The tyrant was the son of Domitian and Agrippina, and was adopted by Claudius after he married Agrippina. Britannicus was the son of Claudius by Messalina. Nero put Britannicus to death by poison when he was sixteen years of age.

But

OF PHILOSOPHY.

67

But what did this extent of power?
 Did it bestow one tranquil hour?
 Tam'd it ferocious Nero's mind?
 Or taught—the monster to be kind?
 Hapless their fate,—doom'd to obey
 A fierce despotick tyrant's sway;
 Whose pow'r unbounded arms his will
 To execute his schemes of ill.—

I here interposed, and said, My dear mistress, you are thoroughly sensible that a passion for those fluctuating things never had dominion over me. I wished indeed for some share in publick concerns to exercise my virtue, lest it should grow feeble by inactivity, and die away uncelebrated.—I confess, replied she, that there is one thing which may captivate souls that are naturally great, but by a habitude of virtue, not arrived to the height of perfection, and that is, a love of glory, and the fame of performing illustrious services to their country. But consider with me in the following detail, how limited this glory is! how frivolous and how contemptible! You have learned from astronomy, that this globe of earth is but as a point, in respect to the vast extent of the heavens; that is, the immensity of the celestial sphere is such, that ours, when compared with it, is as nothing, and vanishes. You know likewise from the proofs that Ptolemy adduces, there is only one fourth part of this earth, which is of

Happiness
 not to be
 found in
 glory and
 in fame.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

itself so small a portion of the universe, inhabited by creatures known to us. If from this fourth you deduct the space occupied by the seas and lakes, and the vast sandy regions which extreme heat and want of water render uninhabitable, there remains but a very small proportion of the terrestrial sphere for the habitation of men. Enclosed then and locked up as you are, in an unperceivable point of a point, do you think of nothing, but of blazing far and wide your name and reputation? What can there be great or pompous in a glory circumscribed in so narrow a circuit? To this let me add, that even in this contracted circuit, there is a great variety of nations differing from one another in their languages, manners and customs, to whom, whether from the difficulty of travelling, or the diversity of tongues, or the want of commerce, the fame not only of particular persons, but even of great cities, cannot extend. In Cicero's time, as he tells us somewhere in his works, the renown of Rome herself, which she imagined was diffused every where, did not reach beyond Mount Caucasus, though the republic was then in her glory, and had rendered herself formidable to the Parthians, and to all the nations in their neighbourhood. Do you not hence discover, how strait and circumscribed that glory necessarily is, which you take such mighty pains to propagate? Shall the praises of a Roman citizen, do you think, resound
in

in countries, where the name even of Rome herself was never heard? Do you not perceive that the manners and customs of different nations widely vary; insomuch, that what is thought to deserve praise in one country, is in another deemed worthy of punishment? For this reason, it is not the interest of a man who thirsts after glory, to propagate his reputation every where. He ought to rest satisfied with the renown which he has acquired among his countrymen, and should not strive to diffuse this dazzling immortality of fame, so flattering to his pride, any further. But of how many personages, illustrious in their times, have the memorials been lost, for want or by the forgetfulness of writers*? But do writings preserve the remembrance of men for ever? Are not

* Thus Horace, Ode 9. Book 4.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; sed omnes illacrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longa
Nocte carent quia vate sacro.
Paulum sepultæ distat inertis
Celata virtus.

Before great Agamemnon reign'd,
Reign'd kings as great as he, and brave,
Whose huge ambition's now contain'd
In the small compass of a grave:
In endless night they sleep, unwept, unknown;
No Bard had they to make all time their own.
In earth if it forgotten lies,
What is the valour of the brave?
What difference, when the coward dies,
And sinks in silence to his grave?

FRANCIS.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

the best compositions, along with the names of their authors, obliterated by time, and wrapt in oblivion? But you suppose, perhaps, you shall secure to yourselves immortality, if you can transmit your names to future ages. But if you contemplate the unbounded ocean of eternity, you will have no reason to rejoice in this supposition. For if the lapse of an instant is compared with that of ten thousand years, as the extent of both is definite, there is a proportion betwixt them, though a very small one; but this same number of years, multiplied by whatever sum you please, vanishes, when compared with the infinite extent of eternal duration. For there can be no proportion betwixt infinite and finite, though there is always a relation, greater or less, betwixt finite and finite. Hence it is, that if the longest duration of renown in future ages is estimated with an unlimited eternity, there is not even a small proportion betwixt them; there is absolutely none.—But you, O deluded mortals! do good from no other view than to exalt your name and to receive popular applause. Insensible to the pleasures resulting from a good conscience and from the practice of virtue, you seek no other reward but the insignificant praises of a giddy multitude.—This silly vanity was once thus agreeably rallied: A solemn fellow, who had assumed the name of a Philosopher, not from the love of virtue, but of vain-glory, was attacked with the bitterest

bitterest reproaches by a man of humour, and told, that he had it now in his power to show that he was truly the Philosopher he professed himself to be, by bearing with patience the abuse heaped upon him. The conceited sophist assuming calmness for a while, seemed to despise all the insults with which he was provoked. But at length he burst forth, and exclaimed, You must surely now confess that I am a Philosopher! Not at all, replied the rallier slyly; I might indeed have believed you one, if you had continued to hold your peace.

But after all, of what importance is it to illustrious men, (for it is of such only that I speak,) of what importance is it, I say, to them who pursue glory by a course of meritorious actions, that their names resound with applause, after their bodies are resolved into dust? For if men die entirely, which our principles forbid us to believe*,

F 4

glory

* It must be acknowledged that the most antient and celebrated among the Greek Philosophers believed in the immortality of the soul; of which number were Thales the founder of the Ionian sect, and his follower Anaxagoras; the famous Pythagoras, the founder of the Italian school; Socrates, the wisest and most virtuous of all the antient Philosophers, and Plato his disciple, the founder of the Old Academy. We may here add, that all the heathens, who believed in the Elysian Fields, and a Tartarus, must have held the immortality of the soul. Epicurus, however, and many other celebrated Philosophers of antiquity, were not of this opinion; believing the soul was material, and died with the body. With regard to the Stoicks, they speak very honourably of the soul of man, as a portion of the essence of the Deity. And Lactantius relates, that Zeno, the founder of the Stoick sect, says,

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

glory is only an imaginary thing; as the person to whom it was appropriated no more exists. But if, on the other hand, the soul is immortal, the righteous spirit, conscious that she is now at liberty, and disengaged from her bounds of clay, takes her flight to the upper regions, and looks down with contempt upon every object below; and happy in the enjoyments of heaven, rejoices that she is exempted from all sublunary concerns.

Go thou, who fondly dream'dst that fame
Is sovereign good;—deluded man!
Go, view heav'n's wide-extended frame,
Compar'd with earth's contracted span:
Beholding fame thus to a point confin'd,
Its fancied worth will cease to charm thy mind.
With titles grac'd, with laurels crown'd,
By every tongue applauded, say,
Will *these* enlarge life's stat'd round?
Will *these* resistless fate delay?
Relentless death has no distinction made
'Twixt high and low, the sceptre and the spade,

says, in the shades below the habitations of the pious are separated from those of the wicked; the former dwelling in peaceful and delightful regions, while the latter are suffering in dark and loathsome prisons. But after all, it must be owned, as Mrs. Carter remarks, that there is nothing but confusion, and a melancholy uncertainty, to be met with in the writings of the Stoicks upon this subject.

Where's

Where's now Fabricius good and brave?

Where Brutus *, virtuous in extreme?

Where Cato, who disdain'd a slave?

Have they not pass'd the Stygian stream?

Their memory lives, dear to the good and wise,

Their awful forms no longer strike our eyes.

Ye err,—who vainly trust your name

Shall flourish green, and never fade;

Time's withering hand shall blast your fame,

And wrap it in oblivion's shade:

Your mortal frame, and priz'd memorial too,

(Victorious twice,) shall conqu'ring Death subdue.

But do not however believe, continued she, that I am an implacable enemy to Fortune, and delight to wage perpetual war with her. I grant you, that this inconstant dame sometimes deserves well of mankind; I mean when she discovers herself to them; when she unveils her countenance and displays her manners. Perhaps you do not understand me. What I want to teach you is indeed so surprising, that I am at a loss to find words to express myself. I say that adverse Fortune is in reality more beneficial to mankind than prosperous Fortune. The latter, while she fondly throws forth her careesses, and would fain persuade us that happiness resides only with her, is quite the reverse of what she appears: the former appears what she really is, displaying by her vicissitudes

Adverse
Fortune
often pro-
fitable.

* The first Brutus.

5

her

her natural inconstancy. The one deceives; the other instructs. This, by a fallacious shew of good, deludes and enslaves the mind; that, by discovering the fluctuating nature of human happiness, enlarges and restores it to its native freedom. The one we behold blown up with vanity, light, waverings and incapable of reflection; whilst the aspect of the other is humble, patient, and wise with her experience in the school of affliction. In fine, prosperous Fortune by her blandishments leads men astray from the true good; but on the other hand, adverse Fortune by her rigours teaches them wherein real happiness consists, and conducts them to it. Let me now ask you this one question: Is it an inconsiderable service that this latter has done you, vexatious and odious as you think her, in putting the fidelity of your friends to a trial? She has separated the true from the false: by her departure she has carried off hers, and left yours. At what price would not you have purchased such a service, when you were at the height of your imaginary felicity! Forbear then to deplore the wealth you have lost, as you have found riches of infinitely greater value,—*your friends*.

Go,—tho' the works of Nature range,
 Admire her in each various change.
 See elements that mutual jar,
 Restrain'd by Concord cease to war:

See Phoebus faithful to the day,
 Pursue thro' heav'n his radiant way,
 And setting in the western main,
 Yield to the moon's more sober reign.
 Behold the empress of the night
 Gladdening the earth with softer light:
 The stars see glittering round her throne,
 By dewy Heiperus led on,
 Revolving each their several rounds,
 Nor trespassing on others bounds.

His proud tempestuous billows chain'd,
 See Ocean within bounds constrain'd;
 Not daring to invade the plain,
 Nor drown the labours of the swain!

These wonders all we owe to Love,
 Who rules below, and rules above:
 'Tis hence, this beauteous order springs
 Thro' all th' infinitude of things;
 Dissolv'd this strong coercive chain,
 Confusion uncontrol'd would reign;
 Atoms, that mingle and unite
 In concord sweet, would jar and fight,
 And ruin by intestine war
 This frame of things, so wond'rous fair.

Hail, Love benevolent! the cause
 Of order, government and laws:
 By Love man's savage heart was tam'd,
 By Love societies were fram'd;
 Hence states in compact firm were bound,
 And law dealt equal justice round:

Hence

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Hence sprung th' endearing nuptial tie,
Pure fountain of perpetual joy ;
Hence Friendship's gentler pleasures flow,
Best source of bliss, best balm of woe.

Ah !—did that pure celestial Love
That actuates and rules above,
Govern supreme the human breast,
Mortals would then be truly blest !

B O O K III.

Philosophy teaches Boethius that all men are in search of happiness, or the sovereign good.—That some falsely place it in the acquisition of riches—Others in the obtaining of power and honours—Others in the glory of great achievements,—or in nobility of birth,—or in the pleasures of the body.—Philosophy clearly demonstrates that the sovereign good is not to be found in any of these externals.—She afterwards explains the true characteristics of this happiness.—She shews that it resides in the Deity, who is the sovereign and the only good,—and that God governs the universe by his goodness, as a helm or rudder.

* **P**HILOSOPHY now ended her song; the harmony of which had so charmed my ears, that for some time I thought her still speaking, and remained attentive. But after a short

- * The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he a while
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;
Then, as new wak'd, thus gratefully replied.

MILTON.

pause,

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

pause, I thus began:—O thou sovereign comforter of dejected minds! what vigour hast thou infused into me by the powerful energy of thy discourse, and the melody of thy numbers! so that I now almost think myself equal to Fortune, and able to withstand her blows. So far am I therefore from having an aversion to the powerful remedies you formerly mentioned, that I earnestly desire you will administer them.—When I saw you listen to me, replied she, with so fixed an attention, I expected the disposition of your mind would be such as you say it is: to speak the truth, I inspired you with this disposition. The consolations that I am now to apply are of the nature of those medicines that are bitter in the mouth, but grateful and strengthening to the stomach. But as you say you are most desirous to hear them; with what ardour would you be fired, if you knew where I am about to conduct you!—Whither is that, I pray you?—To that genuine Felicity, replied she, of whose features you have at present a very imperfect view, as if it were in a dream; but whose supreme beauty and excellence, occupied as you are in the contemplation of deceitful phantoms, you cannot now perceive.—I entreat you then, without delay, said I, to shew me this true Felicity.—Induced by my regard to you, replied she, I shall comply most willingly with your request; but I will first give you a description of false Happiness, with whom
you

you are better acquainted than with the true;
and after we have survey'd that deceitful dame,
I shall turn your eyes upon her opposite, and
charm you with a compleat view of the true
Felicity.

Rich Ceres will reward the swain
With copious stores of golden grain,
Who labours with unwearied toil
His field, and clears from weeds the soil.

If the offended palate rues
The flavour of some bitter juice,
The bee's sweet labour,—sweet before,
Pleases and relishes still more.

When show'ry fouthern blasts abstain
To cloud the skies and vex the main,
The stars shine forth in lustre bright,
And heav'n's wide concave charms the sight.

When first the smiling eastern dawn
Has streak'd with rosy light the lawn,
Then Phœbus mounts his chariot gay,
And flashes round refulgent day.

Awake then, and attentive view
The bliss fallacious men pursue;
Their boasted idols, mark how vain!—
Dissolving thus the fancied chain
That captivates your free-born mind,
The true, the sovereign good you'll find.

Then

to acquire the favour of the multitude, that they may be considered as men of importance: thus they wish to have a wife and children, because they promise themselves much comfort in a family. With regard to friendship*, we ought to consider it as having no place in this arrangement of things: friendship is a gift from Heaven, a kind of sacred felicity, and ought not to be numbered among the goods of Fortune, but among those of Virtue. In the pursuit of every thing else, men have no view but to procure either power or pleasure. As to the advantages of the body, they fall under the same predicament. Thus strength, and a large stature, seem to be attended with power; beauty, and a fine shape, distinguish a man agreeably; and a firm constitution qualifies him for the enjoyment of pleasures: for in all these matters it appears, that happiness alone is what is sought after. Now what a man wishes for, in preference to all other things, this he must esteem the supreme good; which, as we have defined above, is happiness: hence the happiest state is that, which is judged desirable above every other.—Here you have a view of those enjoyments, which mistaken mortals call Happiness;

such of their ancestors as enjoyed the above-mentioned offices. Hence it was, that a man of a very illustrious descent was said to be *vir multarum imaginum*.

* With regard to friendship, we ought to consider it as a gift from Heaven, a kind of sacred felicity, not to be numbered among the goods of Fortune, but among those of Virtue.

wealth,

wealth, honours, power, glory, pleasure. In the last of these Epicurus placed felicity. He considered pleasure alone as the chief good; believing that the pursuit of every thing else, instead of rejoicing the mind, tended to discompose it.

But let us return to the inclinations of mankind. Tho' they forget in what the supreme good consists, yet the desire of it remains unextinguished in their hearts: and they may not improperly be compared to a man intoxicated with liquor, who strives to regain his home, but cannot discover the way that leads to it *. Do they wander, do you suppose, from the supreme good, who endeavour to preserve themselves from want? No, by no means; for surely there is no state happier than that which abounds in every thing, and wherein a man is independent, and needs no assistance. Or do you think they are in a mistake, who believe no felicity greater than to attract notice, and procure respect? Certainly they are not; for that can never be a contemptible acquisition, which mankind strive with so much earnestness to obtain. Again—Is not power to be numbered among the

* Like drunken fops about the streets we roam;
Well knows the sot he has a certain home,
Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,
And blunders on, and staggers ev'ry pace.
Thus all seek happiness, but few can find;
For far the greater part of men are blind.

Dryden's Palamon and Arcite, from Chaucer, B. I.

Is it not probable that Chaucer, who translated the Consolation of Philosophy, borrowed the above simile from Boethius?

goods that are desirable? Why not? for how can that be reckoned an insignificant good, which invests a man with authority and command, and seems therefore to be of greater importance than any other advantage?—And is fame to be considered as of no value? Quite the reverse; for it cannot be denied, but that every thing excellent is also shining and renowned. To conclude—I need scarce observe to you, that happiness is not an unjoyous and melancholy state, disturbed with care and sorrow; because, even in the pursuit of the smallest matters, men are desirous of nothing but what gives them pleasure and satisfaction.—Behold, then, the acquisitions mankind strive to possess. Hence it is, that they are so eager in the pursuit of honour, command, glory, riches, and pleasures; as they believe, by obtaining *these*, they shall secure to themselves independence, respect, power, fame, and delight. Upon the whole, it is plain, however varied their inclinations, that happiness is the sole pursuit of all the human race: and here the wonderful force of nature appears; that, although men's opinions with regard to happiness widely vary, they nevertheless concur in pursuing *it*, as the end of all their actions and desires.

I'll tune my voice, my harp I'll string,
 And Nature's wondrous laws I'll sing,
 That o'er the world's wide circuit reign,
 And govern this discordant scene.

The

The lion, on the Lybian plain,
 Submits to wear a servile chain;
 Devours in peace his offer'd cheer,
 And dreads his keeper's lash severe:
 But, torn by stripes, should the warm gore
 Stream his majestick visage o'er,
 His noble nature straight returns,
 With all his native rage he burns,
 His awful roar alarms the plain,
 Furious he bounds and bursts his chain;
 Springs on his hapless keeper first,
 And with his blood allays his thirst.

The bird, who caroll'd forth his loves
 So sweetly in the shady groves,
 When caught, and fed with choicest fare,
 His master's darling and his care,
 If haply from his cage he spies
 The scenes of all his former joys,
 He spurns his food, and fill'd with rage
 He fluttering bounds and beats the cage;
 In moving notes his woe repeats,
 And pines for his belov'd retreats.

Form'd to a curve, the sapling bends
 To the strong hand, and downward tends;
 Withdraw the hand's compelling force,
 It straight resumes its native course.

The sun, whose all-rejoicing light
 Sets in the western main at night,
 Thro' nether skies his secret way
 Pursues, returns, and brings the day.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

All things, obedient to the source
 Of order, fill their destin'd course:
 Hence thro' the world's stupendous round
 Intire stability is found,
 Which lasts till back, whence it arose,
 Th' exhausted frame of nature flows *.

O deluded mortals! it must be confess'd, immerged as you are in terrestrial objects, that you have nevertheless an indistinct perception of your beginning; that you behold a shadow of it, as through a dream; and that you have also an obscure and imperfect idea of your true end, which is Felicity. Hence it is, that whilst a natural instinct leads you to the true good, a train of phantoms at the same time deludes you, and draws you astray from it.—Come, then, and consider with me, if it is possible for men to obtain the end they have in view, by the means they usually employ in the pursuit of happiness. For if riches, honours, and other advantages of the like nature, crown mortals with felicity, and place them in a state where nothing is wanted or desired—we must acknowledge that happiness may be procured by these acquisitions. But, on the other hand, if they cannot make good what they promise—if they cannot

* Boethius's idea is, that no system of things can be under the direction of order, but *that*, which, after having fulfilled its appointed course, compleats its round or circle by flowing back to its original.

OF PHILOSOPHY.

87

supply every human want—they are but delusions, that impose upon mankind with a counterfeit face of happiness.

Let me therefore ask you, who but lately abounded in riches, if, in the midst of your opulence, you were never discomposed with receiving an injury?—I must confess, answered I, that I cannot remember I ever was in so tranquil a state, as to be totally free from disquietude.—And did not your anxiety, added she, arise either from your wanting something which you desired to have, or your having something which you wished to be without?—That is certainly true.—Did not you therefore, said she, desire the possession of the one, and the privation of the other?—I acknowledged I did.—But a man wants what he desires.—Undoubtedly he does.—And if a man wants any thing, can that man be said to be completely happy?—No.—Were not you then in this state of insufficiency, whilst you were in the midst of your opulence?—What then?—It follows, added she, that riches cannot make a man so rich as to want nothing: this, however, is what they seemed to promise. But, besides, I think we ought always to remember, that riches are by no means a sure and permanent good; as a man may undoubtedly be stripped of his wealth by violence, however unwilling he is to part with it.—He may so.—How can it be otherwise, said she, when you behold every day the

The sovereign good placed by some in the acquisition of riches.

stronger depriving the weaker of his property? For do not all complaints to courts of justice hence arise, one party reclaiming the goods he has been dispossessed of by the oppression and fraud of the other?—Nothing is more true.—There is not any one person, added she, that does not stand in need of the assistance of others, to preserve his riches. But he would not surely need this help, did he not possess what he is in danger of losing.—That is certain.—You see, then, continued she, the very reverse of what was expected from riches takes place : so far are they from being sufficient to a man's wants, that they are the cause of his having more occasion for the assistance of others. But tell me, How is it that men's wants are supplied by riches? Is it because the rich never feel hunger, are not liable to thirst, or that their bodies are insensible to the winter's cold? But the wealthy, you'll say, have supplies in abundance to answer all necessities, to relieve hunger and thirst, and to repel cold. In these matters, it must be acknowledged that riches aid and comfort indigence, but they can by no means satisfy every want. For as we know, with respect to riches, the desires of mankind are unbounded, ever gaping and clamouring for more, in the midst of the greatest abundance; it of course follows, that there are cravings remaining in the human breast, which still want supply, and which will never cease to torment it,

it. I need scarcely add, that a little suffices Nature, whilst Avarice exclaims she never has enough. Upon the whole, since riches, instead of exempting from wants, create new ones; how can mortals suppose that a sufficiency is obtained by them for all their necessities?

Tho' streams of gold pour in from every side,
The restless miser ne'er is satisfied;
Tho' pearls and diamonds 'mid his treasures blaze,
His verdant fields tho' herds unnumber'd graze,
Consuming cares his joyless days attend;
His useless wealth forsakes him at his end.

But dignities, you'll say, render the persons invested with them eminent and respectable. What! have they the power to destroy vice, and implant virtue in the heart? Surely not; for we learn from experience, that places of dignity, instead of eradicating vicious habits, for the most part serve only to strengthen them, and make them more conspicuous. Hence we are always filled with indignation, when we behold honours conferred on the wicked. Hence arose the poet Catullus's resentment against Nonius the senator, whom he calls the bile or imposthume of the state. Is not the disgrace, that honours devolve upon the worthless, very apparent? Their baseness surely would have been less glaring, if they had not been exalted to such dignified stations. Would you re-
deem

The sovereign good placed by others in the obtaining of power and honours.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

deem yourself from the danger that at present hangs over you, by accepting a magistracy in conjunction with Decoratus, that infamous buffoon and informer? Can we persuade ourselves that honours render persons respectable whom we know to be unworthy of them? If you find a man endowed with wisdom, you deem him worthy of respect: for there is a worth peculiar to virtue, which she never fails to communicate to her votaries. But as honours conferred by the populace do not convey this worth, it is manifest they have it not to bestow, and that they are void of all intrinsic merit. Here it ought to be particularly considered—as a person, the more his unworthiness is exposed, becomes thereby the more contemptible; and as eminent dignities cannot make men, who are abandoned, respectable; they must, therefore, as they place the vices of these profligates in a more conspicuous point of view, render them more universally the objects of contempt and hatred. Neither do the dignities themselves escape without injury; men of worthless characters take their revenge upon them, whilst they sully and disgrace them by the contagion of their guilt. But it is very easy to show you, these shadowy honours have nothing in their nature to engage and procure respect; for if a person, though he had been honoured several times with the Consulate, should by accident go among a barbarous people, would this honour render him
more

more respectable in their eyes? Certainly it would not. But this it would infallibly do every where, if respect was an attribute of honours, as heat is to fire, which is hot in every country on earth. Thus, because respect is not inseparably attached to dignified stations, but is only attributed to them by men's false opinions, honours must therefore appear vain and frivolous to people who see them in their true light; and as such, they assuredly appear to all distant nations. — But let me now ask you, Whether, in the very countries that gave birth to them, places of dignity always continue equally respectable? The prætorate, the dignity and authority whereof was formerly so great, you know is nothing now but an empty title, and in point of expence a heavy burthen to the senators. The superintendency of provisions, which was heretofore an honourable office, is now considered as a very despicable employment. But whence doth this arise? Why it proceeds from what we just now observed, that those things, which have nothing intrinsically good and meritorious, lose their splendour and value, as popular opinion varies concerning them. Thus, if dignities cannot render respectable those who are invested with them; if they are themselves sullied by the dishonour which bad men reflect upon them; if they lose their splendour by a change of times; if, in fine, they are of no value among nations who justly consider them; what

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

what beauty, what inherent worth have they to render them the supreme objects of desire? and how is it possible that they can ever communicate worth to those upon whom they devolve?

Tho' Nero shone in glittering vestments gay,
And flowing purple mark'd his sovereign sway;
Yet such a *chief*, so profligate and base,
Was ever deem'd a scourge to human race.
This wretch howe'er dealt round, with impious
hand,

The state's chief honours to his slavish band.
Can honours, then, the sovereign good bestow,
From such a source when dignity may flow?

But do kingdoms, and a familiarity with princes, render men powerful and happy?—Why should they not, if they are durable? Past ages however, and the present, furnish us with too many examples of the dismal reverses of fortune to which crowned heads are liable. O then, may I exclaim, the wonderful efficacy of power, which is not able to preserve itself! But if happiness is measured by the extent of regal dominion, wherever this ends, will not happiness also there end, and misery take place? Now, though several empires be far extended, it must still be acknowledged their limits are bounded by other nations over whom they have no reign. But where-
ever

ever power, which constitutes happiness, ceases, there impotence, which creates misery, must prevail: and hence it necessarily follows, that kings must have a larger portion of misery than of happiness. Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse *, conscious

* The story here alluded to is related very elegantly by Cicero, in the viii Book of his Tusculan Questions.

Nam cum quidam ex ejus assentatoribus, Damocles, commemoraret in sermone copias ejus, opes, majestatem dominatus, rerum abundantiam, magnificentiam ædium regiarum, negaretque unquam beatiorem quendam fuisse.—Visne igitur, inquit, O Damocle, quoniam hæc te vita delectat, ipse eandem degustare, et fortunam experiri meam? Cum se ille cupere dixisset, collocari jussit hominem in aureo lecto, strato pulcherrimo textili stragulo, magnificis operibus picto; abacosque complures ornavit argento auroque cœlato. Tum ad mensam eximiâ formâ pueros delectos jussit consistere, eosque ad nutum illius intuentes diligenter ministrare. Aderant unguenta, coronæ; incendebantur odores; mensæ exquisitissimis epulis extruebantur. Fortunatus sibi Damocles videbatur. In hoc medio apparatu, fulgentem gladium e lacunari, setâ equinâ appensum, demitti jussit, ut impenderet illius beati cervicibus. Itaque nec pulchros illos administratores aspicebat, nec plenum artis argentum; nec manum porrigebat in mensam; jam ipse defluebant coronæ: denique exoravit tyrannum ut abire liceret, quod jam beatus nollet esse.—Satisne videtur declarasse Dionysius, nihil esse ei beatum, cui semper aliquis terror impendat?

For when Damocles, one of his parasites, having launched forth in praise of the splendour of his dominion, the number of his forces, the magnificence of his palace, and his amazing opulence, averring that there never was any man so happy—Will you then, says the tyrant to Damocles, have a taste of this life you are so delighted with, and make a trial of my fortune? It is what I wish, replied the parasite. Upon which, he was placed upon a bed of gold, with splendid coverings, adorned with the richest embroidery. The table was set forth, and decorated with gold and silver plate of the most curious workmanship. Some very beautiful young slaves were ordered to wait at table, and were enjoined to watch his looks, and serve him at the smallest signal. The most exquisite viands were presented to him, with an abundance

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

scious of the danger of his condition, exhibited very strikingly the alarms of royalty, by the terror of a naked sword suspended by a single hair, and hanging over the head. How insignificant a thing then is power, which cannot protect from the tormenting stings of fear, and the restless gnawings of anxiety ! Kings are desirous of living in a state of security, but this state, alas ! they cannot obtain : an illustrious mark, surely, of that

abundance of essences, garlands, and perfumes. Damocles thought himself perfectly happy : when the tyrant, in the middle of this splendid feast, commanded a drawn sword, of the brightest polish, to be suspended by a single horse-hair just over the head of this man so enchanted with his happiness. Immediately all his felicity fled ; his eyes were no more delighted with the beautiful attendants and superb plate ; the delicacies that were set before him lost their relish ; the garlands that bound his brows fell down of themselves. In short, he asked the tyrant's permission to retire, because that now he did not chuse to be happy.—Doth it not hence sufficiently appear, that Dionysius declared himself miserable, as he was conscious there were so many imminent dangers constantly surrounding him ?

Horace also alludes to this story, in Book III. Ode i.

*Diffidus ensis cui super impia
Cervice pendet, non Sicula dapes
Dulcem elaborabunt saporem,
Non avium citharæque cantus
Somnum reducent.*

Behold the wretch, with conscious dread,
In pointed vengeance o'er his head,
Who views th' impending sword ;
Not dainties force his pall'd desire,
Nor chaunt of birds nor vocal lyre
To him can sleep afford.

FRANCIS.

power

OF PHILOSOPHY.

95

power which they plume themselves so much upon! But do you believe that man powerful, whom you see eagerly wishing what he cannot accomplish? Esteem you him powerful, who goes surrounded with an armed guard, and who terrifies those of whom he himself is more afraid? And is he, in fine, to be reckoned powerful, whose power depends solely upon his numerous attendants?—After having thus displayed the imbecility of kings, why need I enlarge upon that of their favourites, whose fortune is liable to be overturned, not only by the inconstancy of a capricious master in prosperity, but also by the adversity to which he is incident, whereof his minions must necessarily partake? Nero would grant no other favour to Seneca, his friend and preceptor, than to make choice of the death he was to suffer. Caracalla commanded Papinian, who had been long powerful at court, to be slaughtered by his soldiers*. Such was the fate of these great men, though before their disgrace they were willing to resign their authority, and to retreat from court: nay, Seneca offered to put Nero in possession of all his wealth; and begged

* Papinian was a famous lawyer, and is said to have excelled all of his profession who preceded and followed him. He was in great favour with the emperor Severus, Caracalla's father, by whom he was made prefect of the palace; and when that emperor died, he committed his sons Caracalla and Geta to his charge. Papinian was a man of the greatest worth and integrity. He was slaughtered by Caracalla, because he condemned his cruelty in the murder of his brother Geta.

of

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

of him only liberty to retire, and enjoy ease and tranquillity. But relentless Fortune precipitated both of these favourites to destruction, and would not permit them to obtain what they wished. Of what value then is this power, which fills men with perpetual dread, and which can neither be retained with safety nor laid down at pleasure?— But perhaps you value power because it procures you friends. What advantage, tell me, can you derive from those friends, whom your prosperity, but not your virtue, attaches to you? Be assured of this, that if prosperity hath made you a friend, adversity will make him your enemy *. And what plague will be more efficacious in hurting you, than an enemy in whom you reposed all your confidence?

True sov'reign power who would obtain,
A conquest o'er himself must gain ;
Nor let his passions wildly stray,
And snatch him from himself away ;
Their turbulence must all be broke,
And tam'd to reason's gentle yoke.

• Ovid says,

Donec eris felix, multas numerabis amicos ;
Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.

When prosperous Fortune shines with bright'ning rays,
Your friends in crowds around you flatt'ring grow ;
But when th' *inconstant* dims with clouds your days,
Alone they leave you to lament your woe.

What

OF PHILOSOPHY.

What tho' you stretch your wide command,
From distant India's fruitful land
To utmost Thule's lonely shore *;
And reign the world's wide empire o'er;
Yet, if this plentitude of sway
Drives not corrod'ing care away;
If phantoms-vain still break your rest;
If grief and rage distract your breast;
Alas! you boast your power in vain,
And still an abject slave remain.

But how unsatisfactory and fallacious is what you mortals call fame or glory! And as it may be unworthily acquired; is it not often ignominious? So that the tragic poet very justly exclaims,

The glory
of great
achievements
esteemed by
some the
sovereign
good.

How oft have erring mortals crown'd the base
With glory and unmerited renown †!

For it must be acknowledged, that multitudes have obtained a shining reputation from nothing else but the prejudices of a misjudging populace. Now what can be more infamous than renown built upon such a foundation? For unmerited praises ought surely to overwhelm with shame

is ridiculous
and unjust
honours
are not
deserved
but unjust

* Solinus informs us that many small islands lie round Britain, the northernmost of which is Thule, where there is almost no night in the summer solstice, when the sun is in Cancer. Some imagine this Thule is Iceland.

† These two lines are taken from Euripides's tragedy of Andromache.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

those to whom they are addressed, as they must be conscious they have no title to them. But when just and well-merited praises are given to a wise and good man, do they add any thing to his felicity? Do they encrease the inward satisfaction and complacency of him, who places his happiness, not in the applauses of a giddy multitude, but in the testimony of an upright conscience? It is also manifest, that if a man esteems it glorious to propagate his fame, he must of course think it dishonourable not to do it. But, as we formerly remarked, there are a great many nations to whom the fame of even the most illustrious characters cannot reach; it follows therefore, that he whom you look upon as exalted to the very pinnacle of glory, must be totally unknown to far the greatest part of the earth. The more I consider this matter, I am the more confirmed in my opinion, that the favour of the multitude is unworthy of attention, as it is very seldom judicious, and never permanent.

Nobility of birth accounted the sovereign good.

But who is there that does not perceive the emptiness and futility of what men dignify with the name of high extraction, or nobility of birth? The splendor you attribute to this, is quite foreign to you: for nobility of descent is nothing else but the credit derived from the merit of your ancestors. If it is the applause of mankind, and nothing besides, that illustrates and confers fame upon a person; no others can be celebrated

brated and famous, but such as are universally applauded. If you are not therefore esteemed illustrious from your own worth, you can derive no real splendor from the merits of others : so that, in my opinion, nobility is in no other respect good, than as it imposes an obligation upon its possessors, not to degenerate from the merit of their ancestors.

Ye mortals vain who tread the earth,
 Ye draw from one great origin your birth :
 From that unbounded Pow'r supreme,
 Who made and governs this stupendous frame,
 He Phœbus with his rays adorns,
 And gilds the silver Cynthia's dewy horns :
 He fill'd with stars th' etherial space,
 And peopled earth with man's imperial race :
 He from his essence pure a ray
 Took, and infus'd with soul the lifeless clay.
 Such the descent of high and low ;
 They all from the same stem illustrious flow.
 Why boast ye then your num'rous train
 Of ancestors, and vaunt your noble strain ?
 Since all from God derive their line,
 And nought ignoble springs from power divine ;
 Go,—imitate your Sire above ;
 Your pedigree by deeds deserving prove :
 For none degen'rate is, and base,
 But he who from his source and virtue strays.

Sensual
pleasures
esteemed
the love-
reign good.

But what shall I say, with respect to sensual pleasures? Is not the appetite, that prompts to the enjoyment of these, always attended with anxiety, and the fruition itself with repentance? What diseases, what intolerable pains (the merited fruits of vice), do they not bring upon those who are abandoned to them? The delight that flows from their gratification, I am unacquainted with; but this I know, the reflection upon these criminal indulgences is always accompanied with bitter remorse. If happiness consists in the enjoyment of these gratifications, I see no reason why the brutes may not attain to it; as they are wholly employed in satisfying the cravings of sensuality. It might be reasonably expected, that much comfort would be found in a wife and children: but this does not always happen. I have heard of a person who bitterly exclaimed, that he had found tormentors in his own offspring—an unhappy state for a parent. But as you have not experienced any miseries arising from this source, neither are under the apprehension of distress from such painful feelings, I shall not stop to describe them to you. I will only add to this a sentiment of my disciple Euripides; who observes, that he who has no children is happy in his misfortune.

Honey's flow'ry sweets delight;—
Soon they cloy the appetite.

Touch

Touch the Bee—the wrathful thing
Quickly flies—but leaves a sting.

Mark here the emblems, apt and true,
Of the pleasures men pursue :
Ah ! they yield a fraudulent joy ;
Soon they pall, and quick they fly ;
Quick they fly—but leave a smart
Deep-fermenting in the heart.

It appears then unquestionably evident, that happiness can never be obtained, by pursuing the ways we have mentioned; that they are all false and erroneous; and tho' they promise to lead men to the sovereign good, they do by no means perform what they undertake. But without entering into a long detail, I shall now explain the evils with which these pretended ways to happiness are perplexed. To proceed then—Do you desire to accumulate stores of wealth? to accomplish this, you strip your neighbours of their possessions. Do you thirst after the splendor of dignities? you must supplicate those that bestow them: and thus, instead of exalting yourself, and becoming respectable, you incur disgrace by the most humiliating condescension. Is power your ambition? in pursuing it, you expose yourself to the snares of inferiors, and lay yourself open to danger from every quarter. Do you contend for glory? you will encounter a thousand vexatious obstructions, and must give up your tranquillity for it. Do you prefer a voluptuous life? in

Happiness,
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nal things.

what sovereign contempt is he not held, who becomes a slave to such a wretched and contemptible thing as his body? Farther, you must surely confess that they raise their pride upon a slight and fallacious foundation, who felicitate themselves upon their bodily advantages. Say—do you surpass the elephant in bulk, the bull in strength, or can you outstrip the tyger in the race? Go, and contemplate the immense extent of the heavens; go and examine, what is still more admirable, that consummate wisdom which governs them; and no longer consider, as objects of admiration, things worthless and contemptible. As to beauty, how transient! and of how short a duration! fading sooner than the vernal flower.—If men, as Aristotle says, had the eyes of a lynx, which could pierce through all preventing obstacles; in taking a view of the interior of a body, as lovely as that of Alcibiades; would not they find it foul and disgusting? It is not therefore to the qualities inherent in their bodies, that mortals are indebted for their beauty; but to the limited and imperfect view of those who behold them. But prize as highly as you please the perfections of the body, still you must confess, that it may be brought to a period in three days, by the raging flames of a fever. From the whole, we may draw this conclusion—As the things above mentioned do not comprize every good, and do not bestow the advantages which they promise,

they cannot of themselves either render men happy, or become the means of procuring happiness.

* Ah! how, by phantoms false beguil'd,
And blind to Truth's propitious ray,
Vain men in mazes dark and wild,
Through ignorance, are made to stray!

Yet gold they seek not from the trees,
Nor sparkling diamonds from the vine,
Nor, Ocean's dainty brood to seize,
On mountains place th' ensnaring twine:

Nor yet to hunt the clamb'ring goat,
They search the shelves that tides o'erflow;—
But what the wealth of seas remote,
And where to find it, well they know;

Where most the † snowy gems abound,
And where the ‡ radiant purple dwells;
Where finny fish are richest found,
Or § urchins clad in bristly shells.—

* The translation of this metrum was done by my late brother.

† The pearls are found in a shell-fish resembling the oyster, but larger.

‡ This dye is found in a shell-fish; it was much used by the ancients, particularly by the Tyrians.

§ A sea-urchin, a delicious shell-fish, a kind of crab, having bristles instead of feet.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

But where the sovereign good abides,
 The blinded mortals never know;
 In heavenly mansions what resides,
 They vainly try to find below.

What doom deserve the silly race?

False joys why let them still pursue;
 Till, cheated with the shadowy chace,
 Too late they languish for the true*.

I have been hitherto employed in giving you a view of *false happiness*. As I am persuaded you have considered it attentively, I shall now proceed to shew wherein real and genuine felicity consists.—I see very clearly, said I, that there is no sufficiency, nothing fully satisfactory in riches, nothing powerful in royalty, nothing respectable in dignities, nothing shining in glory, nothing delightful in pleasures.—But do you perceive, said she, the cause of all this? —A glimmering of it only strikes me, but I shall be happy to know the reason of it more distinctly from you. The cause, said she, is obvious; for that which is one and indivisible in Nature, human ignorance separates; and hence men are misled from what is true and perfect, to that which is imperfect and counterfeit. This truth I shall now endeavour to explain. Tell me then, does that state which stands in need of no-

* *Virtutem videant, intabescantque relicta.*

HORACE.

thing,

thing, want power?—No.—You are in the right, said she, for if any thing wants power, it must want also external aid.—That is true.—Therefore you must confess that sufficiency and power are of one and the same nature.—This I acknowledge.—And do you think, added she, that advantages of such a nature, as power and sufficiency, are to be condemned? On the contrary, are they not worthy of universal respect?—Unquestionably they are.—Let us add therefore, said she, respect to sufficiency and power, and let us consider all *three* as one and the same thing.—I see no objection to their being considered in that view.—But can that be an obscure and ignoble state, continued she, which possesses such extraordinary advantages? or rather, is it not brightened by a shining reputation? For reflect but a little: Have you not already granted that the state we now speak of is powerful and respectable, and that it wants nothing? but if it wants a shining reputation, which it cannot of itself supply, is it not by this defect, in some degree, insufficient?—Surely it is, answered I; and I must confess that reputation is inseparable from the advantages you have mentioned.—You must agree therefore, said she, that the latter differs in nothing from the *three* before mentioned.—The consequence is just.—If any one then, continued she, is in such a state that he needs no external assistance, but by himself can
procure

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

procure all he wants, and besides, is illustrious and respectable; is it not evident that such a person's condition must be very agreeable and pleasant?—I cannot indeed conceive, I replied, how any thing disagreeable or unpleasant can accompany such a state.—It must undoubtedly, said she, be a state of happiness, if what we have before established holds good. And from this, it plainly follows, that sufficiency, power, reputation, respect, pleasure, are all one and the same; differing only in name, but not in substance.—This, said I, is a necessary consequence.—All these things, added she, which are by nature the same and indivisible, mankind, by an effect of their depravity, divide: but while they labour to acquire a part of a thing, which has no parts, they neither obtain what they seek, as it does not exist, nor the thing itself, which they have not directly in their view.—But how does this happen? said I.—He that desires riches, to preserve himself from want, replied she, is not solicitous about power: he prefers meanness and obscurity, and denies himself pleasures the most natural, that he may not lessen the heaps he strives to accumulate. But you must surely confess that a state of sufficiency cannot be *his*, who is destitute of power, barred from pleasures, corroded with chagrin, despicable, and buried in obscurity. But he again whose ambition is power alone, sacrifices to this pursuit

wealth,

wealth, despises pleasures, flights glory, nor does he hold dignity in estimation, unless when accompanied with power. The many advantages wanting to such a person are palpable. He must often want things essentially necessary, and be tormented with anxiety: and as he will find it impossible to guard against those evils, he will soon be convinced that he is far from being powerful. In the same way may we reason with regard to honours, glory, and pleasure. For as all these things are by nature one and the same, he that pursues any one of them separately from the others, will never obtain what he desires.—But what, said I, if a man desires *them all* at once?—He would then indeed desire perfect felicity. But can he ever expect to find it in the acquisitions above-mentioned, which, as we have shewn, do not perform what they promise?—No surely, said I.—In these acquisitions therefore, which are falsely supposed capable of supplying every human desire, happiness you acknowledge is by no means to be sought for?—Of the truth of this, I am perfectly convinced.—Thus then, continued she, I have given you a complete view of false happiness, and of its causes: you have now nothing more to do, than to turn the eye of your mind upon the reverse of all this, and you will instantly perceive *the true happiness* which I promised to shew you.—There is none so blind, said I, that may not clearly perceive
that

The true
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that inestimable good. I had a complete view of it when you just now explained to me the characteristics of its opponent: for, if I am not deceived, true felicity consists in a state of * sufficiency, of power, and honour, in conjunction with a shining reputation, and every desirable pleasure. And, to satisfy you how much your lessons have enlightened my understanding, I declare to you, I am perfectly convinced, that genuine felicity is what is bestowed by these advantages, as they are, in reality, all one and the same.—O my dear pupil, exclaimed she, how happy are you in such a conviction! But you must add to it one limitation.—What is that?—Do you believe that the frail and perishing enjoyments of earth have this state of happiness in their disposal?—No; by no means, answered I: you have proved the contrary so clearly, that I have no doubt remaining upon this point.—These perishing enjoyments, added she, furnish mankind only with the shadow of the supreme good, or at most with goods that are extremely imperfect; but as for true consummate Felicity, this they have not in their power to bestow.—I told her, I was entirely of her opinion.

* The characteristics of the sovereign good, given us by the learned and ingenious Mr. Harris, in his Dialogue concerning Happiness, which contains the best and most consistent view of the Stoick Philosophy that ever was published, are, That it is agreeable to our nature, conducive to well-being, accommodated to all places and times, durable, self-derived, and indeprivable.

—But

—But as you have now, continued she, discovered what the true felicity is, and know how to distinguish it from the false; what now remains, is to teach you where you are to seek for this supreme good.—This is what I have long wished for.—But if it be necessary, added she, as Plato observes in his *Timæus*, to implore the Divine assistance, even in the smallest enterprizes; what think you ought we to do, to render us worthy of so important a discovery as that of the sovereign good?—Let us invoke, replied I, the Parent of Nature: without first addressing him, no work is well begun, nor can be rightly conducted.—You are in the right, said she; and immediately warbled forth, with delightful melody, the following hymn:

O Thou! who by eternal Reason's law
The world dost rule! great Parent of the heavens
And of the earth! by whose command supreme,
Time flows from birth of ages! who, unchang'd
And firm thyself, mak'st all things else to move*;
Thy sovereign will to fleeting matter gave
Its various forms, by no external cause
Impell'd, but by the idea of the Best.
In thy great mind conceiv'd, of malice void:

* The Platonick doctrine of a sovereign mind is, that it is stable in itself, yet the fountain of all motion; and operating good perpetually, by a perpetual efflux of form and beauty. *Note from Sydenham's elegant translation of the greater Hippias, p. 95.*

The

The mighty model, fram'd by art divine
 Ere ages yet began, thou copiedst forth
 In this vast world ; whence, all that's good and
 fair,

The lively image of the fair Supreme. *

* * * * *

O gracious Parent ! elevate our souls,
 And give us access to thy throne sublime,
 That stable seat of pure felicity !
 All earth-born cares remove ; dispel the mists
 Of sense ; and with a ray from heav'n illumine
 Our darken'd minds. Give us to see thy light,
 Give us to view the source of good unveil'd ;
 And fix, O ever fix our eyes on thee !
 Delighted may we rest on thee, the stay
 And joy of hallow'd souls, and center all
 Our happiness on thee, our Sire benign,
 Our guide, protector, solace, hope, and goal !

Happiness,
 or the
 sovereign
 good, really
 exists, and
 resides in
 the Deity,
 who is the
 sovereign
 and the
 only good,

As a faithful representation of false happiness,
 and of the true Felicity, has been represented to
 you, I shall now proceed to explain, wherein the

* The 12 lines that follow, in the original, refer to some of the most
 subtle, abstruse parts of Plato's Philosophy ; and are very obscure. I
 have not translated them, as I despaired of making any version of
 them, that would be satisfactory to myself, or agreeable to my readers.

The first 13 verses of this translation were given me by my brother
 before-mentioned.

The original of the verses in this metrum is remarkably beau-
 tiful.

perfection

perfection of Felicity consists. In view to this, we ought first to examine, whether there exists in nature such a good as you have lately defined; that our imagination may not deceive us, in taking a mere chimera for a thing that is real, and has a being. But that the sovereign good does exist, and that it is the source and center of every other good, cannot be denied. In fact, when we call a thing imperfect, it is only to distinguish it from some other thing that is perfect. Hence, if any thing, of whatever particular class or kind of existence it be, appears to be imperfect; there must of necessity be also some other thing that is perfect in this very class; for if you take away perfection, imperfection ceases to exist, and becomes a term quite unintelligible. Nature also doth not commence her operations by rude and unfinished productions; she forms, at first, the best works, the purest and most complete; but afterwards gives birth to things less perfect and efficacious. So that, if, as we have before shewn, there is an imperfect felicity in this world, there must be also in it a solid and a perfect one.—Your conclusion, is most just and true.—It will not now be difficult to discover, continued she, where this true Felicity resides. Every mind, endowed with apprehension and judgment, finds in itself a proof that God, the author of all things, is good. For, as we can conceive nothing better than God, can we have

have any doubt but that he, who has no equal in goodness, is good? And Reason, while it thus demonstrates so clearly that God is good, evinces at the same time, that the sovereign good resides in him. For if this were not so, God could not possibly be, as he really is; the author of all things; for there would be some other Being more excellent than he is, who possesses the supreme good, and who must have existed before him; because all perfect things plainly precede things that are less complete. That our reasonings may not therefore run on into infinity, we must confess that the Supreme God comprehends in his nature a plenitude of perfect and consummate good: but perfect good we have proved to be true felicity. It necessarily follows, then, that true felicity resides in the Supreme Divinity.—This must be admitted, said I, as I can see nothing that can be objected against it.—But I pray you, continued she, let us see how you can firmly and irrefragably prove what I have advanced, that the Supreme God contains in his nature a plenitude of perfect and consummate good.—How shall I prove that? replied I.—Do you suppose, said she, that the Author and Parent of all things hath received the supreme good, with which, as we have shown, he abounds, from any thing extraneous or without? or, do you imagine, that the substance of this *felicity*, which resides in God, is in any respect different from *that* of the Deity himself? If you suppose

suppose that Deity hath received this good from without, you must likewise believe, that what bestows a thing, is more excellent than what receives it. But we have already admitted, what cannot be denied, there is nothing more excellent than God: it is therefore manifest that he cannot derive this felicity from any thing without. But if this good is supposed to dwell in God, and to be of a different substance, it is inconceivable, allowing God to be the author of all things, what could have united these two substances that thus differ from one another. Besides, a thing which differs from another, cannot be the same with that from which it is supposed to differ; consequently, what differs in essence from the supreme good, cannot be the supreme good: but it would be blasphemy thus to conceive of God; as it is manifest nothing can be more pure and perfect than that sovereign and independent Being. In fact, nothing can exist whose nature is better than its origin. We may therefore conclude, with absolute certainty, that the origin of all things is really and substantially the supreme good.—Undoubtedly we may.—But did not you own, said she, that true felicity was the sovereign good? —I confess I did.—You must therefore also grant that God is that very felicity.—I can neither call in question, answered I, your principles, nor the consequence which you draw from them.—Let us now try, continued she, whether we cannot prove
I the

the same thing more convincingly by considering it in this view, that two sovereign goods, different from one another, cannot exist. For of the good that differs, it is apparent one cannot be what the other is : therefore neither of them can be perfect, as the one wants the other. But if neither of them are perfect, it is evident that neither the one or the other is the sovereign good. As such goods cannot differ from one another ; and we have before proved, that God and Happiness are the sovereign good ; it necessarily follows that the Sovereign Felicity, and Supreme Divinity, are one and the same.—There is nothing, said I, more consistent with reason and truth, and nothing more suitable to the perfections of the Deity, than the consequence which you have at present drawn.—But I shall now, added she, following the example of the geometricians, who commonly deduce from their demonstrations, what they call corollaries, infer, from what has been advanced, a most honourable one for man. I say then, since men become happy by the enjoyment of Felicity, and as Felicity is the same with the Divinity himself, it is manifest, that they become happy by the enjoyment of the Divinity. But as by the participation of justice, or of wisdom, men become just or wise ; so, by the participating of Divinity, they must necessarily, and for the very same reason, become Gods. Consequently every happy man

is:

Is a God *; for tho' there is but one in essence, there is nothing to hinder but there may be many, by a participation of the Divine Nature.—I allow, said I, that this corollary is admirable, and of infinite value.—But what I am just going to add, said she, is still more worthy of your admiration.—What is that?—As happiness appears to be an assemblage of many things, ought we not to consider whether these several things constitute, conjunctly, the body of happiness? if I may so express myself; or whether there is not some one of these particular things that composes its essence, and to which all the rest have a relation?—I wish, said I, you would illustrate this matter by examples.—Do you not believe, added she, that happiness is a good?—Yes certainly, answered I; and the supreme good.—You may say the

* The Stoicks express themselves very strongly upon this point. Epictetus says to his pupil, "You are a distinct portion of the essence of God, and contain a certain part of him in yourself. Why then are you ignorant of your noble birth? Why do not you consider whence you came? Why do not you remember, when you are eating, who you are that eatest; and who that feedest? When you are in the company of women; when you are conversing; when you are exercising; when you are disputing; do you not know that it is a God you feed, a God you exercise? You carry a God about with you, wretch, and know nothing of it. Do you suppose I mean some God without you, of gold or silver? It is within yourself you carry him, and profane him, without being sensible of it, by impure thoughts and unclean actions." Mrs. Carter's *Arrian*, Book II. Ch. viii. §. 2.

The apostle Paul talks in more moderate terms, when he represents the bodies of good men as the temples of the Holy Ghost.

same, continued she, of all the other goods ; for perfect sufficiency is reckoned supreme felicity ; so is supreme power ; so likewise is an honourable rank, a shining reputation, and a life of pleasure.—What do you conclude from all this ? —Are all these things, answered she, sufficiency, power, reputation, and the rest, to be considered as *constituent members*, so to speak, of felicity ? or, do they bear a relation to a *good* as their *principal part* ?—I understand, said I, what you propose to investigate, and I am desirous to hear it made out.—Attend, said she, and I will elucidate this matter. If all these things were members of felicity, they would differ from one another ; for it is the property of members, or parts that differ from one another, conjunctly taken, to compose one body. But I have proved to you that these things are all the same, and do in no respect differ. They can by no means, therefore, be members of happiness ; for if they were, happiness might be said to be made up of one member, which is absurd, and cannot possibly be.—All this is undoubtedly true, said I ; but I wish to hear the sequel.—We know, replied she, the things we have so often mentioned, do all of them bear a relation to a *good*. For if sufficiency is desired, it is desired because it is esteemed a good : if power is sought after, it is for the same reason ; and upon this account likewise it is, that we desire to obtain respect, glory, and pleasure. Good then is the motive

give and the end of all these wishes : for that which contains no good, either in reality or appearance, can never be desired. On the contrary, things that are not in their nature good, are wished for, because they have the appearance of being real goods. Hence, good is justly esteemed the motive, the foundation, and the end of all the desires of mankind : but, that which is the cause of our desiring any thing, is itself what we principally want. For example ; if a man mounts his horse on account of health, it is not so much the exercise of riding that he seeks, as its salutary effects. And as we have proved that these latter things are pursued from no other intention than to obtain happiness, it is happiness therefore only that is sought after. Hence it clearly follows, that the good we have been reasoning upon, and happiness, differ in no respect, but are of one and the same substance.—I see no cause, said I, to dissent from your opinion.—But it has been proved, added she, that God and true happiness are one and the same thing.—It has so.—We may therefore certainly conclude, said she, that the substance of God is also the same with that of the supreme good.

O ! hither come, ye mortals weak and vain !
 Immers'd in grov'ling cares, by fond desires
 Led captive, whose opprobrious chains you mourn ;
 O hither come ! come to this wond'rous source

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Of goodness! here you'll find from weary toil
 Sweet rest, a sovereign balm for every wound;
 From Passion's gales, and Fortune's raging waves,
 An harbour safe. Not all the gold that shines
 On Hermus' banks, or rolls with Tagus' stream;
 Not all the dazzling gems that Indian mines
 Prolific yield, can clear the mental sight
 From vain delusions. Ah! the glaring toys
 Perplex the mind, and Reason's beams obscure;
 The shining bane, that mortals blind adore,
 Ripens in gloomy caverns of the earth;
 Base in its origin, of heaven-born minds
 Unworthy the pursuit. Ah! spurn the earth,
 And all its fordid treasures; soar aloft,
 Upborn by Virtue, wing your way to heav'n:
 Transcendent splendor, unexhausted floods
 Of glory, there, enraptur'd you'll behold:—
 A light ineffable, to which compar'd,
 The sun's refulgent ray is weak and dim.

I am entirely of your opinion, said I; for all
 this has been proved by insuperable arguments.—
 But how greatly would you value it, said she, did
 you fully know what this good is?—I should
 value it infinitely, if I could at the same
 time attain to the knowledge of God, who
 is the sovereign good.—I shall elucidate this
 matter, replied she, by reasons that are uncon-
 trovertible, on condition that you allow me
 to

to make use of the principles formerly established.—To this I willingly consent.—Have I not made it evident, continued she, that the things which the majority of mankind so eagerly pursue, are not true and perfect goods; because they differ from one another, and because when one or more of them are wanting, the others cannot confer a complete and absolute good? Have I not likewise shewn you, that the true sovereign good is composed of an assemblage of all the goods, in such a manner, that if entire sufficiency is a property of this good, it must at the same time be endowed with power, and it must be also respectable, glorious, and abound with pleasure? Without this union, unless they are all considered as one and the same thing; is there any ground for ranking them among things desirable?—You explained this matter so well to me formerly, that I have no doubt about it.—Whilst these things differ from one another, added she, they are not goods; but as soon as they become *one*, they commence *goods*: that they are goods then, is it not owing to their participation of unity?—So it appears to be.—But will you grant, that every thing which is good, becomes such by the participation of what is good? Do you find in this any difficulty?—None.—For the same reason you must own, that unity and good are the same; for things that do not naturally differ in their effects, must necessarily

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

have the same substance.—This cannot be denied*.—Do you not perceive, continued she, that every thing which exists is permanent, so long as it preserves its unity; but in the instant it loses this, it is dissolved and annihilated?—How do you draw this conclusion?—In the animal creation, replied she, as long as the soul and body are strictly united and conjoined in one, this being is called *an animal*; but when this union is dissolved by the separation of the one from the other, the animal perishes, and no longer exists. The human body furnishes us with an instance of this; for whilst the unity of its form subsists by the conjunction of its members, it re-

* Power, says Philosophy, and the other characteristics of the sovereign good, only become good by being united or by partaking of unity. Now, as they partake of unity, *e contra*, unity must partake of them; and as they are good, unity must also be good;—therefore unity and good are the same.

Boethius was a great admirer of Plato: there are many reasonings of this kind to be found in the writings of that illustrious philosopher.

Our author proceeds to prove, that every thing desires unity, or to remain in a permanent state. And the consequences he draws from this reasoning about unity and good, in p. 124, 125, are, Since all things desire unity and good, and as unity is the same thing as good, hence what was proved before again follows, that all things desire good; and hence, we may also conclude, that it is one and the same good or happiness which all creatures pursue. Our Philosopher farther infers, that it is the love of unity, or the desire that all creatures have of existing, which fixes and renders every thing stable; for without this tendency or impulse, all things in the universe would rove and float at random.

tains

tains the human figure; but when these parts are separated, this unity is destroyed, and the body ceases to be what it was before. In like manner, were we to examine other things, we should find that every thing subsists so long as its unity is preserved; but when that is destroyed, the thing itself loses its existence.—I am persuaded, replied I, that in every case we should find this to be true. Is there any being, added she, while it acts according to nature, that foregoes this desire of existence, and wishes corruption and dissolution?—In contemplating the various tribes of animals, answered I, which are all of them endowed by nature with a power of willing and not willing, I cannot discover an individual among them, which of itself, and without constraint, renounces its desire of self-preservation, and voluntarily hastens to destruction; for every animal endeavours to preserve itself, shuns death, and avoids every thing that is hurtful to it. But with regard to plants and trees, to all the vegetable kingdom, and to things totally inanimate, I am doubtful whether I ought to have the same opinion of them.—There is no cause, replied she, why, in relation to these, you ought to entertain any doubt. Do you not always behold plants and trees spring up in soils most agreeable to their respective natures, where they are sure to thrive, and are in no danger of perishing soon? Some of them grow on plains, some on hills,

hills, others in marshes; some are found sprouting forth among rocks; barren sands are congenial to others; and if you attempt to transplant any of them to a different soil, they quickly fade and die. To every thing that vegetates, nature gives what is proper for its subsistence, and takes care that it should not perish before its ordinary period. Need I tell you, that plants draw all their nourishment by their roots, which are as so many mouths hid in the earth, through which the sap ascending by the heart and bark, communicates vigour to the whole vegetable. And farther, is it not admirably contrived, that the softest and most tender part of plants, the pith, as it is called, is shut up in the middle of the trunk, and surrounded with hard and solid wood, which is covered with a coat of bark formed to endure the inclemencies of the weather, and to resist all external injury? What care has not nature also taken to multiply plants, by multiplying their seeds! Who does not know that they are a kind of machines, which do not preserve their existence for a time only, but immortalize themselves, as it were, by a successive and perpetual generation? Things likewise totally inanimate, do not they also, for the same reason, incline to what is most suitable to them? Why does flame mount upwards by its levity, and the earth gravitate to the center by its weight, if it is not because

cause these motions and tendencies are agreeable to their respective natures? Besides, it is manifest, that as what is agreeable to the nature of a thing preserves it; so what is contrary to its nature destroys it. Now, dense bodies, such as stones, whose particles strongly cohere, resist an easy separation of parts; whereas the particles of fluids, such as air and water, are easily separated, and as easily re-united. But with regard to fire, it avoids all separation of its parts, as is plain by the rapidity with which it every where spreads. You must observe, that I am not here speaking of the voluntary motions of a rational soul, but only of the necessary operations of nature. Thus, for example, we digest our food without thinking of it, and draw our breath in sleep, without our perception: for the desire of existence peculiar to animals, is not derived from an intellectual will, but from natural principles implanted in them. Hence it is, that the will, induced by powerful reasons, sometimes chuses and embraces death, altho' nature dreads and abhors it; and, on the contrary, the same will frequently restrains men from immoderate indulgence in those pleasures, to which nature always strongly impels them, as the only means of perpetuating the human race. The love therefore which every creature bears to itself, does not appear to be so much an effect of a volition of the mind, as of a natural impression. For Providence hath implanted, in all things the
hath

hath created, an instinct for the purpose of self-preservation, which powerfully excites them to retain their beings, as long as by the course of nature they can : so that you cannot entertain the smallest doubt, but that every thing which exists, naturally desires existence, and avoids dissolution.—I confess, said I, that I now clearly perceive, what to me formerly appeared uncertain.—To proceed, continued she ; what desires to subsist desires also to retain its unity ; for, if its unity is destroyed, it cannot continue to exist.—That, said I, is very true.—All things then, added she, desire unity.—I agree with you they do.—But I proved before, that unity is the same thing as good.—You did so.—Thus all things, she further added, desire good ; whence you may also conclude, that it is one and the same good which all creatures desire.—It is impossible, said I, to conceive any thing more true : for all things in the universe are either fixed by no relation, and finding themselves destitute, if I may so express myself, of unity as their principle, rove and float at random without direction ; or, if there is any thing to which they have a tendency and impulse, it must be to the supreme and all-sufficient good.—O my dearest pupil, said she, how greatly do I rejoice that your mind clearly apprehends the truth I was so desirous to teach you ! You must likewise now distinctly perceive, what you said you were ignorant of before.

—What

—What was that?—The end, added she, of all things; for the end of all things is what they pursue, and because, as we have before shewn, this is good, we must necessarily hold it as an established truth, that good is the end of every thing that exists.

With deep research, whose studious head explores
Thy treasures, Truth, and anxious seeks to shun
Error's fallacious paths, let him arouse
His slumbering pow'rs, and turn their piercing
glance

Home on himself: the knowledge he pursues,
And toils with fruitless search to find without,
In the recesses of his mind deep-hid
He'll trace delighted. Truth, divinely bright,
Error's bewildering mist will quick disperse,
And, powerful as the Sun's enliv'ning beam,
Cheer and illumine his breast; for when this frame
Of cumbering clay involv'd the soul, and shed
Oblivion o'er its powers, its heav'n-born light
It damp'd, but quench'd not: principles of truth
Still copious lurk'd within, till wak'd to life,
They blossom by the cultivating hand
Of soul-enlarging science, and bear fruit.
Were not, celestial Truth, thy gen'rous seeds
Implanted in the heart, ah! how could man
Distinguish wrong from right? say *this* is base,
And worthy *that*? Hence Plato, sage sublime,
This.

This maxim teaches:—"All our knowledge flows
"From recollection of forgotten truths*."

God governs the universe by his goodness, as a helm or rudder.

I am entirely, said I, of Plato's opinion. You have now a second time made me recollect truths that had wholly escaped me; the remembrance of which was obliterated, first, by the contagious union of the body with the soul, and afterwards by the pressure of affliction under which I laboured.—If, said she, you will reflect upon the concessions you have already made, you will soon bring to your remembrance a very important truth, of which you lately acknowledged your ignorance.—What, I beseech you, is that?—The œconomy, replied she, or secret springs, by which the universe is conducted.—With regard to that, I own I confessed my ignorance; and although I have some idea of what you can say upon the subject, I wish to be more fully instructed in it from your own mouth.—Did you not acknowledge, a little while ago, added she, that there was not the smallest reason to doubt, but that the world

* It was Plato's opinion, that God at once created the souls of all mankind, who were to live in all ages of the world; that he distributed them among the celestial spheres, and taught them the nature of all things. From this creation of the souls of men before their bodies, Plato drew his opinion of *reminiscence*, or, that all our acquired knowledge proceeds only from remembrance; for if the soul existed before the body, and possessed all manner of knowledge; it follows, that all we learn through the course of our lives, is only the remembrance of what we had forgotten. Hence Socrates says in the *Phædon*; "that to learn, is no other than to remember what had been before forgotten."

was directed by the wisdom of God? I think so still, said I; and I shall never have any doubt of it; and, with your permission, I will explain to you the reasons that induce me to be of this opinion. A world, such as this, consisting of different and discordant elements, would never have assumed its present form, unless there had been a wise Intelligence to unite and reduce them to order: and even after such a conjunction, the jarring of such opposite materials would have disunited and ruined the beautiful fabrick made up of them, had not the same Intelligence upheld what he had so admirably connected. For undoubtedly, the order that reigns through Nature could not proceed in such an established course; could not display such regular and uniform motions, with regard to places, times, the production of effects, their duration and qualities, if there were not a Being to over-rule and direct this infinite variety of changes, without being liable to change himself: and (whatever he is, for he is above my comprehension) this Being, by whom all things are created, I call *God*; a name given him by all nations.—As your sentiments upon these matters, said she, are now so just, there remains little more for me to do, than to leave you to the enjoyment of your felicity, and to dismiss you sound and healthful into your own country. But let us first examine a little further

ther the principles we have established.—Did we not place sufficiency among the articles that constitute happiness? And have we not agreed that true Felicity is no other thing than God himself? —We have so, said I.—And does God, added she, want no assistance from without, no foreign aid, in the government of the universe? Assuredly he does not; otherwise he would not be fully sufficient in himself.—That, said I, necessarily follows.—He directs therefore all things by himself alone.—It must be acknowledged he does.—But I have shown you that God is the supreme good.—I remember very well, you did.—He must therefore, continued she, direct all things by good, since he governs them by himself, whom we have proved to be the supreme good. This then is the helm or rudder by which the great machine of this world is steadily and securely conducted.—I am thoroughly satisfied, answered I, that it is; and I had some surmise, tho' but a slight one, of what you have now made clear to me.—I believe it, said she, for your faculties are much quicker in apprehending truth than they were. But what I am going to add will contribute not a little to your discovering it more perfectly.—What is that?—As we believe, said she, that God makes use of his goodness as a rudder to conduct this wonderful machine of Nature, and as I have taught you, that all things which exist have a natural tendency to good; can there be any doubt, then,

then, but that they all voluntarily submit to his pleasure, obey his nod, and give themselves up without constraint to the rule of his all-directing hand? This is necessary, I answered; for otherwise, things, instead of being established in concord and security, would be in a state of discord and confusion. — Is there any thing, which follows the dictates of Nature, that endeavours to counteract the will of God?—Nothing certainly.—But was any thing to attempt this, what could it do against him, whom we have proved to be supremely happy, and consequently endowed with Almighty power?—Assuredly it could do nothing.—There is nothing then that has either inclination or power to resist this supreme good?—I am persuaded there is not.—It is this supreme good then, said she, that alone rules all things by unbounded power, and conducts them with amazing benignity. The solidity of your arguments, said I, and the force and beauty with which they are expressed, delight me so much, and carry such strong conviction with them, that I am overwhelmed with shame, that I ever objected to them.—You have read in the fable, added she, of the giants storming heaven; of the repulse they met with; and how they were punished as they deserved. But may we not now try to strike our arguments for a little while against one another? perhaps, from their collision, some useful spark of truth may

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break

break forth.—Do as you please.—No person, you own, can doubt of the power of God extending over all things.—No man in his senses has any doubt of it.—There is nothing then which God cannot do, as his power is unlimited.—Nothing.—Can God then do evil?—No; by no means.—Then evil must be nothing*, since God cannot do it, who can do every thing.—Whilst you give me, said I, such a wonderful idea of the mysterious circle of the Divine Felicity, you seem to sport with me, and to bewilder me in a perplexing maze. For you first began with happiness, and said it was the sovereign good; and that it resided in the Supreme God, who was himself the sovereign good, and the perfect Felicity; whence, you inferred that no person could be happy unless he became likewise a God. You added, that good was made up of the same substance whereof God and happiness were composed, and that it was the object and the desire of every thing in nature. You have also demonstrated that God governs the world by his goodness, as by a helm; that all things voluntarily obey him, and that evil has no

* Epictetus says, as a mark is not set up for the sake of missing the aim, so neither doth the nature of evil exist in the world.—Mrs. Carter illustrates this very sensibly in a note. Happiness, the effect of virtue, says she, is the mark which God hath set up for us to aim at. Our missing it, is no work of his; nor so properly any thing real, as a mere negative and failure of our own. Carter's Epictetus. Enchiridion, S. 27.

existence.

existence. These truths you have established, not by strained and far-fetched arguments, but by strong and natural reasons; one proof constantly leading to, and confirming another.—It was never my intention, replied she, to entertain you with delusions. We have now, by the favour of God, executed the important work we proposed, when we invoked his assistance: and I have made it clear to you, that it is a property essential to the Divine Nature, not to go out of itself, nor to admit any thing extraneous to its nature. Parmenides says of the Deity, he is like to *the round of a well-polished sphere*. It is this Supreme Intelligence, that moves the vast frame of the universe to its remotest circumference; whilst he himself remains in the center, fixed, and immovable. If in reasoning upon these matters I have rather chosen to draw my arguments from the subjects themselves, than to borrow them elsewhere, this ought not to surprise you, as you have learned from Plato, that there ought always to be a correspondence, or to use his expression *, a kind of alliance, betwixt the words, and the things expressed by them.

Happy the mortal who disdains
The bondage of terrestrial chains,

* This expression is used in Plato's *Timæus*.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

On contemplation's wings who soars,
And goodness' radiant source adores.

For his lost bride, consum'd with grief,
Orpheus from musick sought relief;
And pour'd forth such enchanting song
As drew the waving woods along :
Attentive to his tale of woe,
The rolling rivers ceas'd to flow ;
The feather'd tribes their songs forbear,
His sweeter harmony to hear ;
Tam'd by the magick of his lyre,
The savage race forego their ire ;
The lion, careless now of prey,
Sees bounding Does around him play ;
His rage subdu'd, the timid hare
Views the keen hound without a fear.

But vain was all his tuneful art ;
Love's fire still rages in his heart.
Those numbers, which could all things tame,
Nothing allay'd their master's flame.

The pow'rs above th' unhappy Bard
Accus'd, as merciless and hard :—
And mad with anguish of his pain,
Descends to Pluto's gloomy reign.

His pulse beats high, with nobler fire
He sings, and strikes his golden lyre ;—
Exhausting all th' harmonious art
His mother whilom did impart,
Each melting, captivating air,
Taught him by love, and by despair ;

Whilft

Whilst the powers that rule below
 Implore, in pity to his woe,
 To abrogate the fates' decree,
 And give him back Eurydice.

Hell's dreaded porter * stood amaz'd
 At strains so sweet, and gap'd and gaz'd;
 The furies, crown'd with snakes, who tear
 And harrow guilty breasts with fear,
 Now, first relent, and pity know,
 And down the tears unwilling flow :
 A pause of rest Ixion found ;
 His wheel stops at the powerful sound ;
 Whilst, Tityus, thy tormented breast
 To rend, the rav'nous vulture ceas'd ;
 And Tantalus (his raging flame
 Allay'd by song) forgets the stream.

He sung ;—the Bard's resistless art
 Touch'd Pluto's unrelenting heart.
 I yield, says hell's tremendous lord,
 I yield ; his bride shall be restor'd,
 Shall re-ascend with him to life ;
 His song has won him back his wife.—
 I grant her ;—but these terms ordain,
 Till he escapes from our domain
 He shall not stop, nor turn his eye.—
 But ah !—what terms can lovers tie ?
 Unruly Love no compacts awe,
 His rapid will his only law.

* Cerberus.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

When now with toil the hapless pair
Had well nigh reach'd the upper air,
Poor Orpheus! too, too weak of mind,
Stops, turns, and casts a look behind:
He look'd—he saw—and was undone—
His dearer life for ever gone.

This tale instructive points to you,
Whose souls the *Good Supreme* pursue.
Ah!—if deluded with the glare
That thoughtless Vice and Folly wear,
(Like Orpheus impotent of mind)
You cast a wishful look behind;
You lose, from heav'n vouchsaf'd, the ray
To guide you to eternal day.

B O O K IV.

Boethius wonders why evil things happen to the good, and good things to the evil.—Philosophy shows him that the good only are powerful, and the evil impotent.—That rewards are appointed for the former, and punishments for the latter.—That the wicked who suffer chastisement, are happier than if they had been exempted from punishment.—That it is better to suffer an injury, than to commit one.—Philosophy afterwards defines what Providence is, and what Fate or Destiny.—She demonstrates that all fortune, whether prosperous or adverse, is good.

PHILOSOPHY, with ineffable grace and dignity, having poured forth these soft and enchanting strains; I, not intirely disburthened of the load of grief which had so miserably oppressed me, interrupted her, as she was continuing her discourse. How shall I express my gratitude to you, my only guide to the true light? All your discourses have been full of comfort; not only from the divine

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testimony

Boethius
wonders
why evil
things hap-
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the evil.

testimony they carry along with them, but from the irresistible arguments you have employed, in establishing the truths which they convey. From the oppression of grief, these truths had escaped my remembrance ; yet, as you observed, I was not wholly ignorant of them. Would you have me declare to you the principal cause of my trouble ? It is to behold evil prevail, and pass unpunished in a world, which is under the absolute direction of a Being who is goodness itself. This, you must own, is astonishing. But what still strikes me more is, that while Wickedness flourishes and prescribes the law, Virtue is not only deprived of the reward she merits, but is also trampled under foot by the base and profligate, and suffers the punishment due to impiety. You will surely agree with me, that it furnishes matter for exhaustless wonder and complaint, that such things should happen in a system conducted by a Being all-knowing and all-powerful, and who certainly wills nothing but what is *the best*. —Undoubtedly, replied she, it would be a matter not only of infinite wonder, but it would be altogether absurd and monstrous, if in the well-regulated family of so great a master, contemptible vessels, as you suppose, should be esteemed precious, and precious vessels deemed contemptible. But this is not so : for if the consequences we have drawn, from the principles laid down, are indisputable, you will be obliged to confess, that

that under the government of God, of whose reign I now speak, the good are always powerful, and the evil, on the contrary, weak and contemptible ; that vice is always punished, and virtue constantly rewarded ; that prosperity is ever the lot of the good, and adversity inseparable from the wicked. These, and other comfortable truths of the like nature, which shall be farther illustrated, will remove the cause of your complaints, and restore your courage and magnanimity.— Having formerly, my dearest pupil, exhibited to you a *picture* of true happiness, and having shown you where she resides, and having premised every thing necessary for you to know, I shall now trace out the way that will lead you to your home. I will give your soul wings to soar aloft to the mansions on high ; and, eased of every earthly oppression, you shall, under my direction, by my road, and with my vehicles, return safe and healthful to your native country :

For I can furnish wings to rise
 From fordid earth, and mount the skies :
Tb' exulting soul, upborn with *these*,
 Heaven's loftiest heights ascends with ease.
She flies, more rapid than the wind,
 And leaves the wand'ring clouds behind ;
 The gleaming meteors she transcends ;
 Above the globe of air ascends ;

Then,

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Then, through the fiery region springs,
 As lightning quick, with daring wings :
 Next to the planets' mansions soars,
 And their extended rounds explores ;
 With Phœbus, glorious source of day !
 She journeys in his radiant way :
 A soldier now with Mars she rides,
 Now chill with aged Saturn glides ;
 She visits ev'ry planet's dome,
 O'er all the zodiac pleas'd to roam.

Perfisting in her daring flight,
 She soars to still a nobler height ;
 Ascends to heav'n's extremest sphere,
 Nor interrupts her swift career,
 Till she has reach'd the blissful plains
 Of princes, where the Sovereign reigns ;
 Where the great Sire in state resides,
 And firm his winged chariot guides ;
 With hand unerring holds the rein,
 And rules the world's tumultuous scene.

If thus with vent'rous wing you rise,
 And re-ascend your native skies,
 Tracing your origin, you'll say,
 " This is my country ; here I'll stay ;
 " I'll ne'er forego these blest abodes,
 " These glorious mansions fit for gods."

And should you from those regions deign
 To throw your eyes to earth again,
 You'll pitying view the wretched fate
 Of tyrants, thron'd in splendid state,

Doom'd

Doom'd ne'er to reach those seats of bliss,
Exil'd from God and happiness!

Ah! said I, your promises are great and delightful; and I make no doubt but you will fulfil them. Let me therefore intreat you, without delay, to satisfy the expectations you have rais'd.—You must first be convinced, replied she, that the good are always possessed of power; whilst the wicked are entirely destitute of it. By proving to you the one assertion, the other will appear plain: for since good and evil are contrary, if good is powerful, evil must be impotent; and if the impotence of evil is perspicuous, the strength and stability of good must be confessed. But that your conviction of the proposition I have now asserted, may be the more complete, I shall proceed to prove it, from both these principles; establishing the important truth, by arguments drawn sometimes from one of these topicks, and sometimes from the other.

Philosophy shows, that the good only are powerful, and the evil impotent.

In men, two things must concur to produce an action; the will, and the power. Both the one and the other are so necessary, that if either of them fail, no effect can be produced. A man cannot do any thing without the concurrence of his will; and the concurrence of his will is useless, if he is destitute of the power of accomplishing his purpose. Hence it is, that if you see any person desirous of obtaining what he cannot procure,

cure, you need not doubt but that he wants the power of obtaining it.—This is a matter so clear, said I, that it is impossible to be denied.—And if you see another person do what he wills, can you doubt that he had the power to do it? —By no means.—But a man is esteemed powerful, in respect of what he is able to do; and weak, in relation to what he is unable to perform.—That, I acknowledge, is true.—Do you remember, said she, what I formerly proved, that the will of man, however different the objects are which it pursues, hath no other end in view but happiness.—I remember distinctly this has been demonstrated.—But do you recollect, it has been shown, that happiness is the supreme good of man, and that there is not one who is not desirous of this good, since all pursue happiness?—No, I cannot be said to recollect it; for it has been so firmly rivetted in my memory, that it is always present.—All men, therefore, said she, the good as well as the bad, without distinction, endeavour to acquire good.—Undoubtedly they do.—But is it not true likewise, that men by obtaining good become good? —It is an unquestionable truth.—Do good men then obtain what they desire? —I think they do.—But if evil men obtain the good, which they pursue, they can no longer be evil.—They cannot, surely.—Since then both the one and the other pursue good, which the good only acquire, it appears incontestable, that the good
are

OF PHILOSOPHY.

are powerful, and that the wicked are impotent.—None can doubt the truth of this, but such as either know not the differences of things, or are incapable of comprehending the force of any reasoning.—Again, said she, If there be two Beings, who have the same end in view, and one of them accomplishes his purpose by making use of natural means, whilst the other has it not in his power to pursue that method, but follows a course not indicated by nature, and does not therefore attain his end, but only imitates him who has attained it; which of these two, in your opinion, is the most powerful?—Altho' I have some idea of your meaning, said I, I beg you would make it clear by an example.—You cannot deny, then, that the motion of walking is natural to man?—I cannot.—Neither can you have any doubt, but that walking is the natural office of the feet?—I can have no doubt about that.—If therefore a person who is able to use his feet, walks with them, whilst another, who is deprived of this power, creeps upon his hands, and endeavours to imitate him who walks; which of these persons do you think has the most power?—Go on, if you please, said I; for no man can doubt, but that he who is in possession of his natural faculties, is more powerful than the person who is deprived of them.—But the supreme good, continued she, is the end which the good and bad have equally in view: now the good pursue this end in

the way pointed out by nature, by a course of virtue; whilst the bad strive to acquire this inestimable prize, by gratifying a variety of corrupt desires, which surely is not the natural way to procure it. Do you differ from me in opinion?—No, answered I; the conclusion you have drawn is just. But from what I formerly granted, the good must necessarily be endowed with power, and the bad, on the contrary, destitute of it.—You go before me, said she, and have prevented me in the consequence I was about to draw; and it is a good sign, and gives hope to the physician, when Nature assists, when she exerts herself, and resists the malady. But as I see you so quick in apprehending my arguments, I shall not spread and unfold them so much, but shall draw them up in a closer form, in what is to follow.—Behold then the great imbecillity of the wicked, who cannot even compass the end to which their natural disposition leads them, and to which they are in a great measure, as it were, compelled! But how much greater would it have been, if Nature, which enlightens them, had refused an aid which is so powerful, and almost irresistible. Consider attentively, I pray you, to what extremity the impotence of such men is reduced. For they are not trifles; they are not frivolous prizes which they desire, and in vain pursue; but it is for the chief good, the most essential of all things, that they languish; and though to obtain this, they labour night and day,

day, yet they miserably fail of success; whilst the power of the virtuous, in acquiring this desirable object, is eminent and indisputable. But to return to our former illustration: If a person who walks on foot, has gone so far that he has no more country to traverse, you esteem him very powerful in walking: you must therefore certainly allow that man to be extremely powerful, who has obtained the end of his wishes, the possession of that good beyond which nothing is to be desired. As this is the case, it plainly follows, that the wicked are totally destitute of power. For why do they forsake virtue, and pursue vice? Doth this behaviour proceed from their ignorance of good? But is there a greater mark of weakness than to be involved in the wretched darkness of ignorance? Or, do they know the road they ought to pursue, but are led astray from it by their passions (as the luxurious, for instance, by intemperance), because they have not firmness enough to resist the temptation of vice? Does not this also exhibit the highest degree of weakness? Or, finally, do they knowingly and willingly give up with virtue, and rush into wickedness? If they behave thus, they not only cease to be powerful, but they even cease to exist: for Beings who neglect to pursue the end common to all things that exist, cease in reality to be. You are surprised, perhaps, to hear me assert, that the wicked, who are the majority of the human race, have no existence:

existence: nothing however is more true. That the wicked are bad, I do not deny: but that they can with propriety be said to exist, is what I will not admit. You may call a carcase a dead man, but you cannot call it properly a man; so I grant, that the vicious are profligate men; but that they have a real existence, I cannot acknowledge: for a thing exists only so long as it preserves its rank, its nature, and constitution; but, when it loses these, it ceases then to be, as it is deprived of what is essential to its being. But you may alledge, that the wicked have certainly a power to act. This is what I will not contest. But this power is an effect of weakness, not of strength. They can do evil, that is true; but this they could not do, if they had retained the power of doing good; and their capacity to do evil, demonstrates still more evidently that they can do nothing. For since evil, as we have before proved, is nothing*; it is therefore clear, that while the wicked can do evil only, they can do nothing.—This, said I, is abundantly perspicuous. — That you may comprehend wherein consists the excellence of this power with which the virtuous are endowed, you ought to recollect, what was so lately made evident, that nothing is more powerful than the sovereign good.—This, I told her, I remembered.—But can the sovereign good, said she, do evil?—No surely,

* Page 130.

it cannot.—And can any person think that men can do all things?—No man in his senses can think so.—But men may do evil.—Devoutly do I wish they could not.—Since then, continued she, he who can do good, can do every thing; but he who can do evil only, has not this desirable power; it is manifest, that such as can do evil, have less power than they that can do good. To this let me add, what has been formerly proved, that power is of the number of the things to be desired; and that all things desirable have a relation to that good, which constitutes the perfection of our nature. But the power of committing wickedness can have no relation to that good, therefore it is not to be desired; but as all power is desirable, it is evident that the liberty to do evil is not real power. From the whole of this reasoning, it clearly follows, that the good only are endowed with power; whilst weakness, nay entire impotence, is what alone falls to the share of the wicked. The opinion of Plato is hereby also verified, that the wise only have the power to do what they desire*: the wicked may indeed do what
their

* This opinion of Plato is taken from the Gorgias.—In which Socrates says to Polus—"I maintain, O Polus, that the orators and the tyrants, as I told you formerly, possessed in their cities but a very circumscribed power; for they did nothing, so to speak, which they were desirous to perform, although they did what appeared best to them in their own opinion."

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

their wayward fancies dictate, but can by no means accomplish their desires. They may strive to gratify their passions, in view to procure to themselves the good which they wish; but this good they cannot possibly acquire, because impiety and vice can never conduct to happiness.

Monarchs with wonder we behold,
With dazzling diadems crown'd,
Shining with purple and with gold,
With guards encircled round.

Exalted on their lofty thrones,
With boundless power elate,
They bend the world beneath their frowns,
And what they will is fate.

Could we their hidden breasts explore,
Where restless passions rend,
Deceiv'd with glaring pomp no more,
Soon would our wonder end.

For ah!—these lords of human kind
Are captives led at will,
Of headstrong tyrants fierce and blind,
That lord it o'er them still.

Plato proves likewise in the same treatise, and in his *Alcibiades*, that the wicked are not endowed with power; that it is better to suffer an injury than to commit one; that the good and the wise are alone happy; that the wicked are always miserable, but that they are still more so, if they escape unpunished.

All the above-mentioned points Boethius handles and discusses in this ivth Book, very ingeniously and acutely.

Lust,

OF PHILOSOPHY.

147

Lust, venom'd source of foul desires,
Inflames their madden'd souls ;
Here Malice lights his vengeful fires,
Here Rage his billows rolls :

For more, here restless Av'rice craves ;
Here Envy stings the heart ;
Successless Hope here loudly raves,
And leaves a galling smart.

With tort'ring inmates thus distressed,
Why envy we the great ?—
Depriv'd of freedom, void of rest,
How wretched is their state !

Do you not then perceive, continued she, with what infamy vice is disgraced and sullied ; and with what a lustre virtue beams forth ? This is a certain proof that the good never go unrewarded, and that the bad never escape without punishment : for in whatever a person does, he proposes to himself an end, and that end is in reality the reward he pursues. Thus they who enter the lists, and engage in the race, have for their end the crown, which is the prize contended for. But we have already shown that happiness is the good sought after, as the end of all that a man does. All the human race therefore propose to themselves the same good, as the reward of their actions. Now this good

Rewards
are ap-
pointed for
the good,
and pu-
nishments
for the
wicked.

is inseparable from the virtuous, since no person can properly be called virtuous who is destitute of it; consequently, virtue can never want its reward. Let the wicked then rage as much as they please against the wise man, they shall never be able to deprive him of his crown, nor to blast it upon his head; for the wickedness of another can never tarnish that inherent lustre which is natural to virtue. If a man hugs himself in the possession of any advantage which he has received from another, he may be stript of it, either by the person who bestowed it upon him, or by others. But as the reward of the virtuous is derived from virtue alone, a man cannot lose this reward, unless he ceases to be virtuous. Finally; since a reward is desired, because it is supposed to be a good, can we suppose, that he who possesses the good itself is deprived of the recompence? But what reward does he enjoy? The fairest, certainly, and the richest of all recompences. Recall to your memory the excellent corollary which I formerly deduced, and attend to what flows from it. As the supreme good is happiness, it follows, that all good men, for the very reason that they are good, become happy; but if they are happy, they must of necessity also become Gods. Thus divinity is the recompence of the good; a reward which no time can impair, no power can diminish, no wickedness can obscure. As matters are thus constituted,

constituted, no wise man can entertain a doubt, but that punishment likewise is inseparable from the wicked: for good being as opposite to evil, as punishment is to reward; it is apparent, that if there be a recompence for good, there must, on the contrary, be a chastisement for evil: and as the reward of the virtuous is virtue herself, so vice is the punishment of the vicious. But whoever is chastised with a punishment, acknowledges that he is afflicted with an evil. If therefore the wicked did rightly understand themselves, they would never suppose that they are exempted from punishment, when vice, the worst of all evils, not only afflicts them, but pollutes and entirely depraves them. But let us contemplate the punishment of the wicked, as it stands in opposition to the reward of the good. You have been taught lately by me *, that every thing which exists preserves the unity which constitutes its being, and that every thing which preserves this, is good; consequently, every thing which exists must also appear to be good. Hence it again follows, that every thing which strays from what is good, ceases to be: the wicked therefore must cease to be what they were: but that they were formerly men, their human shape, which still remains, testifies. By degenerating into wickedness, then, they must cease to be men. But as virtue alone

* Pages 119, 120.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

can exalt a man above what is human; so it is on the contrary evident, that vice, as it divests him of his nature, must sink him below humanity: you ought therefore by no means to consider him as a man whom vice has rendered vicious. Tell me—What difference is there betwixt a wolf * who lives by rapine, and a robber, whom the desire of another's wealth stimulates to commit all manner of violence? Is there any thing that bears a stronger resemblance to a wrathful dog who barks at passengers, than a man whose dangerous tongue attacks all the world? What is liker to a fox, than a cheat, who spreads his snares in secret to undermine and ruin you? to a lion, than a furious man, who is always ready to devour you? to a deer, than a coward, who is afraid of his own shadow? to an ass, than a mortal, who is slow, dull, and indolent? to the birds of the air, than a man volatile and inconstant? and what, in fine, is a debauchee, who is immersed in the lowest sensual gratifications, but a hog who wallows in the mire? Upon the whole, it is an unques-

* Thus Epictetus in Arrian: By means of this animal kindred, some of us, deviating towards it, become like wolves, faithless, insidious, and mischievous; others, like lions, wild, and savage, and untamed; but most of us foxes, and wretches even among brutes: for what else is a slanderous and ill-natured man, than a fox, or something yet more wretched and mean? See then and take heed that you do not become such wretches.

Mrs. Carter's Translation, B. I. ch. iii. sect. 2.

tionable

tionable truth, that a man who forsakes virtue, ceases to be a man; and as it is impossible that he can ascend in the scale of beings, he must of necessity degenerate and sink into a beast.

Ulysses' wand'ring sails, long tost
By storms, arriv'd on that fam'd coast
Where, offspring of the god of day,
Circe the fair bears sovereign sway.

The dame the wand'ers entertains
With magic draughts and soothing strains;
Chang'd by her wonder-working hand,
Which wide o'er nature bears command,
Ulysses' mates, her wond'ring guests,
The faces wear and forms of beasts;—
The lion's awful form and roar
While one assumes, one grunts a boar;
Chang'd to a wolf, while this laments
His fate,—in howls he pours his plaints;
Whilst that a tyger's aspect wears,
But mild and void of rage appears.

Tb' Arcadian god * no sooner found
His hero in her fetters bound,
But strait he breaks her potent charm,
And sets Ulysses free from harm.
But ah! the sage's headlong crew
Their treach'rous bev'rage still renew,
Till, turn'd to swine, they change their food,
And roam for acorns in the wood:

* *Mercury.*

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Of man's fair form and speech bereft,
 No trace of former likenefs left,
 Their souls unalter'd 'wail their fate,
 Base brutal forms to animate.
 But weak the power in herbs that dwells ;
 Bounded the dame's enchanting spells ;
 O'er matter tho' their force prevails,
 To change the heav'n-born soul it fails ;—
 Entire remains th' immortal part,
 Beyond the reach of magic art.

More potent Vice, and full of harms,
 More to be fear'd than Circe's charms ;
 Her poison quenches Reason's ray,
 And steals the man entire away ;
 Sinks him to brute in heart and head—
 The human form unaltered.

I agree with you, said I, and acknowledge that the vicious are not unjustly called beasts ; for though they preserve the human form, with regard to the faculties of the soul they are really metamorphosed into brutes. But I heartily wish that their wicked and ferocious minds, which burn with rage to annoy the good, had not the power of hurting them.—The wicked have no such power, replied she, as I shall show you in a little time. But if this power, which they are supposed to have, and of which you so heavily complain, were taken from them, they would be relieved of the greatest part of their punishment :
 for

for certain it is, though it may appear incredible to many, that the wicked are more unhappy when they can accomplish their evil designs, than when they want the power to perpetrate them: because, if it is an unhappiness to will evil, it is still a greater to have the power to execute it; for, if bad men were divested of this power, their wicked desires would languish without effect. Since misery, then, is annexed to the will, and to the power of doing evil, and also to the accomplishment of it, it necessarily follows, that they who have the will and the power to do evil, and who actually commit it, are trebly miserable.— This I must confess, said I; but at the same time I earnestly wish that the wicked were speedily delivered from this misery; I mean, that they were deprived of the power of doing hurt.—They shall be stript of this power, added she, sooner perhaps than you would wish, or than they themselves imagine: for there is nothing that glides away in the narrow bounds of human life, however slow and imperceptible its progress may be, which to an immortal soul can appear to have a very long duration. The most flattering hopes of the wicked, the lofty edifices of their criminal projects, are often overturned by unforeseen accidents. But the subversion of these puts a stop to the progress of their misery; for this good reason, that if wickedness renders a man miserable, he must become more and more so the longer

longer he continues wicked; and such persons I should believe to be infinitely miserable, if death did not come and put a period to their wickedness: for if the consequence I have drawn from the unhappiness of the wicked is true, it is evident, that a misery which is eternal, is nothing less than an infinite misery.—This consequence, said I, appears to me wonderful, and difficult to be assented to; nevertheless I must own that it is perfectly conformable to what has been established. You think justly, replied she; because he who esteems it difficult to assent to a conclusion, ought either to show that the premises are false, or that the consequence is unfairly drawn; for if the premises are established, and the conclusion fairly deduced, he can have no reason to reject it.

The wicked who suffer chastisement, are happier than if they had been exempted from punishment.

But what I am now going to communicate to you is not less surprizing, though it necessarily flows from the same premises.—What is that, I pray?—That the wicked, who suffer the chastisement which they merit, are happier than they would have been, if justice had allowed their crimes to have escaped unpunished. To convince you of this, I will not confine myself to common and popular arguments; that punishment corrects bad morals; that the fear of chastisement leads back to the right way; and that the sufferings of the wicked deter from vice: but, leaving these things entirely out of the question, I am persuaded that the wicked, whose crimes remain

main unpunished, become much more unhappy in another way.—In what way do you mean?—Have we not agreed, added she, that the good are happy, and the wicked miserable?—We have.—But if you mix some good with the misery of a man, will not he be more happy than another whose misery is pure, entire, and without any mixture of good?—Certainly he will.—Again—If the unhappiness of the latter, who is deprived of every good, is increased by additional misery, does he not become much more wretched than he whose distress is allayed by the participation of some good?—Unquestionably he does.—The wicked, then, continued she, even when they are punished, have a degree of good annexed to their condition, to wit, the punishment itself, which cannot be an evil, because it is just; and, on the contrary, when they escape punishment, their misery is increased by another evil, which is this very exemption from punishment: for did not you yourself confess, that this exemption was an evil?—I own I did.—The wicked, then, said she, are much more unhappy when they enjoy an unmerited impunity, than when they suffer a chastisement which they deserve: but that it is just to punish the wicked, and unjust that they should escape with impunity, is a truth which cannot be denied.—Nobody, said I, denies it.—Nor can any man deny, added she, but that every thing which is just, is good; and that, on the contrary,

contrary, every thing which is unjust, is evil.— This, said I, necessarily follows, from the conclusions formerly deduced. But tell me, I beseech you; Is there any punishment for souls after death?—Undoubtedly, replied she; and great ones too. I am of opinion, however, that they are inflicted for different purposes; some with rigour to punish *, and others with clemency to purify and meliorate. But it is not my design at present to enlarge upon this subject. I have been employed hitherto in proving that the power of the wicked, which appeared to you the most shameful thing in the universe, is, in reality, nothing; that their wickedness never escapes unpunished,

* Commentators imagine that Boethius here acknowledges, not only as a christian, but a catholic, that some wicked men are condemned to eternal punishments; whilst others, whose wickedness is not so great, are purified and refined by sufferings. But as it is Philosophy who is made to deliver her opinion, it is more probable that she here expresses the sentiments of the Platonists or of the Pythagoreans, which were, that the souls of some persons were so impious, that they could not be cleansed from their pollution by any purgation whatever, and that they were therefore condemned to eternal punishments; but that others, whose crimes were not so heinous, after undergoing a variety of sufferings, were admitted to the pleasures of elysium. Thus Virgil, in his 6th *Æneid* :

*Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
Supplicia expendunt; aliæ panduntur inanes
Suspensæ ad ventos; aliæ sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni;
Quisque suos patimur manes; exinde per amplum
Mittimur Elysium, et pauci læta arva tenemus.*

The

punished, notwithstanding the disagreeable idea you entertained to the contrary : that their liberty to do evil, which you wished might soon come to an end, is not of long duration : that the longer it continues, they are so much the more miserable ; and that if it were to continue for ever, their misery would be infinite : that, in fine, if the wicked escaped by an unjust exemption from punishment, they would be more unhappy than if they were chastised according to their demerits ; and consequently, that they are never more rigorously punished, than when they are supposed not to suffer for their crimes.—I have attended carefully to your reasoning, said I, and it appears to me convincing and conclusive : but if I were to take the opinions of mankind upon these subjects, your arguments would be so far from gaining their assent, that it would be difficult to find a person that would listen to them.—I am of your opinion, replied she : for mankind are so accustomed to darkness, that they cannot fix their

The relics of inveterate vice they wear,
 And spots of sin obscene in every face appear ;
 For this are various penances enjoin'd,
 And some are hung to bleach upon the wind ;
 Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
 Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires ;
 All have their manes, and those manes bear ;
 The few, so cleans'd, to the abodes repair,
 And breathe in ample fields the soft elysian air. }

DRYDEN.

eyes

eyes upon the light of a truth which dazzles them. They are like those birds that see clearly by night, but whose weak sight cannot bear the splendor of day: whilst they pay no regard to the established order of things, but consider only the gratification of their own passions; it is not wonderful, that they should think there is a happiness in the liberty of doing evil, and in exemption from punishment.—But as to you, my pupil, do you attend to the law, which is engraved upon your own heart *. If you conform your mind to what is good, you need not be anxious about a reward from the hand of a judge;—you have by your behaviour become one of the most excellent of human kind. But if you pursue evil, you

* The true law, says Cicero, is right reason, conformable to the nature of things; constant, eternal, diffused thro' all; which calls us to duty by commanding, deters us from sin by forbidding; which never loses its influence with the good, nor ever preserves it with the wicked. This cannot possibly be over-ruled by any other law, nor abrogated in the whole, or in part; nor can we be absolved from it, either by the senate or by the people; nor are we to seek any other comment or interpreter of it, but itself; nor can there be one law at Rome, another at Athens; one now, another hereafter; but the same eternal, immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common master and governor of all, God. He is the inventor, propounder, enactor of the law; and whoever will not obey it, must first renounce himself and throw off the nature of man: by doing which, he will suffer the greatest punishment, tho' he should escape all the other torments which are commonly believed to be prepared for the wicked.

Fragment of Cicero from Book III. of his Republick, in Lactantius. Translated by Dr. Middleton.—Life of Cicero, vol. iii. p. 331, 352.

This valuable fragment of Cicero is an excellent description of conscience, or the moral sense.

need

need no other chastisement;—you have degraded yourself into a lower order of beings. Thus; if with a fixed attention, and banished every thought besides, you contemplate alternately the radiant heaven, and sordid earth; by the very nature of vision, you will now suppose yourself exalted to the stars, and anon involved in the clay.—I know that the vulgar, continued she, do not reflect upon these things. What then? shall we take them as models, whom before we affirmed to resemble the beasts? If a person deprived of sight, and who had even forgot that he ever had it, should assert that he has every human faculty in perfection; should we be so weak as to believe, that such as retain the use of their eyes were become blind? But as the vulgar reject all the foregoing reasoning, they will also refuse their assent to what I am now going to propose, tho' it is supported by arguments equally strong and conclusive; to wit, that persons who commit an injury are more unhappy than those who suffer one.—I am extremely desirous, said I, to hear you prove this point.—Do you deny, replied she, that every wicked man deserves punishment?—No, I do not.—And you are satisfied, from a great variety of proofs, that the wicked are miserable?—Unquestionably they are.—Again:—You have no doubt but that every man who merits punishment is miserable?—To this I agree.—But if you were

It is better
to suffer an
injury,
than to
commit
one.

appointed a judge, on which of the two would you inflict punishment; on him who hath committed, or on him who hath suffered the injury? —I would not hesitate a moment in punishing the offender, in reparation of the injury done to the party offended. —But still you would reckon the injuring person more unhappy than he who had suffered the wrong? —I certainly would. —Thus then, added she, for these reasons, and for others which flow from the same principle, that vice, from the baseness of its nature, renders men miserable; it is evident, that when an injury is done to any man, it is the cause of misery to the doer*, but not to the sufferer. But our pleaders at the bar, continued she, are of a different opinion, as they strive to excite the compassion of the judges in favour of those who have suffered cruelty and oppression, whereas pity is more justly due to the oppressors; who ought therefore to be conducted to judgment, as the sick are to the physician, not by angry, but by friendly and compassionate accusers, that they may be cured of

* It is no paradox to say, that by nature man is gentle, and social, and faithful. —How then is it a paradox to say, that when he is whipt, or imprisoned, or beheaded, he is not hurt? If he suffers nobly, doth not he come off even the better, and a gainer? But he is the person hurt, who suffers the most miserable and shameful evils, who instead of a man, becomes a wolf, a viper, or a hornet.

Mrs. Carter's Arrian, B. IV. c. i. f. 13.

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their vices by the physick of chastisement. I am, therefore, of opinion, that no pleaders ought to be employed to defend the guilty. I either wish them to relinquish it altogether, or to join the party of the accusers ; for I cannot discover how they may be useful in any other way. Were it possible for the wicked to obtain a slight view of the charms of that virtue which they have forsaken ; and could they but persuade themselves, that, by passing through the discipline of chastisement, they should be purified from the stains of vice, and restored to virtue ; they surely would not consider the discipline as an evil, neither would they implore the assistance of an advocate to defend them ; but, without hesitation, they would submit themselves to the will of their judges and their accusers. Hence it is the wise are not susceptible of hatred : for none but a madman hates the good ; and to hate the wicked is fully as irrational ; for their propensity to vice is really as much a disease of the mind, as any of the ordinary human distempers is of the body. Now as a person suffering under a disease is not an object of resentment, but claims our compassion ; we have still more reason to pity, and not to hate those unhappy persons over whom vice, the most deplorable of all distempers, has gained the dominion.

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Deluded

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Deluded men, your breasts what frenzies sway,
 With impious hand to cut life's brittle thread?
 If death you wish, intent to seize his prey,
 Death ceaseless urges on his rapid steed.

To savage beasts a helpless prey expos'd,
 To lions, tygers, and the foaming boar;
 With deadly ills on every side inclos'd;
 Your swords why stain you in your own warm
 gore?

What demon drives you, tho' you differ wide
 In manners, and in judgment disagree,
 Headlong to plunge in war's tumultuous tide,
 And furious urge each other's destiny?

Ye greatly err—your feuds compose, and cease;
 Cease, savage men, to riot thus in blood:
 To merit give its due; delight in peace;
Pity the wicked, and revere the good.

Here I interposed, and said, I now plainly
 perceive the nature of that happiness and of that
 misery which are essentially and inseparably an-
 nexed to the virtues and the vices of the de-
 serving and the base. But in this fortune, in which
 the vulgar put such a value, I clearly discover a
 mixture of good and evil: for no wise man
 ever preferred exile, indigence, and ignominy, to
 the possession of riches, honour, and power, and

to the happiness of living with esteem in the bosom of his own country: and wisdom really shines with a greater lustre when her votaries are at the head of a state, and communicate their happy influence to the people under their direction; and particularly, when imprisonment, tortures, and the other punishments ordained by the laws, are employed only for the chastisement of bad citizens, for whom they were at first instituted. Why then should things undergo so unnatural a change? Why should the worthy suffer the punishment due to crimes, and the profligate rob the virtuous of their rewards? I am greatly amazed at these irregularities, and I am extremely desirous to learn from you the reason of so unjust a distribution. I should be indeed less surprized, if I could persuade myself that chance had the direction, and was the cause of all this confusion in the universe. But I am overwhelmed with astonishment when I reflect, it is God that directs all events; and though he often bestows desirable things upon the good, and inflicts things grievous upon the wicked; yet, on the contrary, he frequently afflicts the good, and dispenses to the wicked all that they wish. So that I cannot comprehend, unless you explain it to me, what difference there is betwixt the effects of his providence, and the operations of blind Fortune.—It is not at all surprizing, replied she, as you do not know wherein the order established

Boethius complains of the evil that prevails in the world.

in the universe consists, that you should imagine you see irregularities in it, and things done without design: but though you be ignorant of the reason of so excellent an order, never entertain a doubt, whilst a good governor presides over the world, but every thing is rightly conducted, and as it ought to be.

Round the pole, in fair array,
Circulates the Bear his way;
Slow Boötes drives his wain
Nightly o'er th' etherial plain,
And his course compleated nigh,
Dips a while in nether sky:
Stare the crowd, and strive to guess
The cause of these appearances!

Cynthia's orb at full, grows pale,
Shadows dark her disk assail;
Stars, her splendor hid before,
Stud the heav'n's wide concave o'er;
Struck the vulgar with alarms!
Labouring moon to free from charms,
Rend with founding brass the air—
Weary heav'n with ceaseless pray'r.

None admire when Boreas raves,
And the tempests raise the waves;
Wonder none, when Sol's warm ray
Melts the hills of snow away!
Open here the causes lie,
Perspicuous to every eye;

Things

Things whose causes are not plain,
 Vex and discompose the brain;
 Each appearance rare or new,
 Grov'ling minds with terror view.
 Sloth unthinking drive away,
 Illume the mind with science' ray;
 Fear and wonder soon will cease,
 And man possess his soul in peace.

We ought undoubtedly, said I, to banish sloth, and strive to increase in knowledge. But as it belongs to you to discover the most secret causes, and to unveil things wrapt up in darkness, I beseech you to deliver me from my present perplexity, and to explain the mystery I mentioned to you.—You propose to me, replied she with a smile, the most intricate of all questions, which I am afraid all our arguments will not be sufficient to solve: for the subject is of such a nature, that when we have lopped off one difficulty, like the heads of the hydra, innumerable others immediately spring up; so that there would be no end of them, did we not seize and quell these growing doubts by a quick and vigorous effort of the mind. The question then, whereof you want a solution, is involved in the five following points, which it will be necessary to illustrate: 1. The simplicity or unity of Providence. 2. The order and chain of Destiny. 3. Unexpected events attributed to chance. 4. The

prescience of God and divine predestination.

5. The liberty of the human will.—You are undoubtedly sensible that these are very arduous and perplexing subjects: but as a knowledge of them is a part of the medicine I proposed for your cure, and will contribute much to it; I shall employ the short time that remains to me, in giving you some light and information of these particulars. Whilst I pursue, in a connected chain, that train of reasoning which the subject suggests, I shall deprive you of the pleasure you receive from the harmony of my verses.—Do as you please, with regard to that.—She then resumed her discourse, as it were, from a new source of topicks, and argued as follows.

The production of all things, the renewal and gradual progression of whatever is liable to change; every thing, in a word, that is moved, derives its causes, order, and forms, from the immutability of the divine understanding. Now, the divine understanding, tho' single, and in itself uncompounded, employs a variety of means or instruments for conducting the affairs of the universe. These means, when we consider them only as they exist in the divine Intelligence, are what we call Providence*; but when contemplat-

Philosophy
defines
what Pro-
vidence is,
and what
Fate or
Destiny.

* Boethius speaks here as a metaphysician with regard to the divine Providence, which the heathens represented under the figure of a Roman lady, who held a scepter in her one hand, and seemed to point with it, to a globe placed at her feet; intimating thereby that she governed the world, as a good mother of a family.

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ed, in relation to the things which receive motion and order from them, this is what the antients called Destiny*. So that if we reflect with attention on the efficacy of the one and the other, their difference will easily appear. For Providence is that intelligence, or divine reason, which resides in the sovereign master of the universe, and directs all things; whilst Destiny is that inherent state or condition of moveable things, by means whereof Providence retains them in the order and arrangement in which she has placed them. Providence, therefore, at one and the same time, comprehends all things, however different, however multiplied they be; but Destiny gives motion to every particular thing, in the mean time appointed, and in the place and under the form appropriated to it. So that the model of this order of things, when we consider it, as wrapt up in the divine Intelligence, is Providence; whereas the accomplishment of the same order, drawn forth and executed in the course of time, is Destiny,

* Or Fate. Quid enim, says Minutius Felix, aliud est fatum, quam quod de uno quoque nostrum Deus effatus est? qui cum posset præscire materiam, promeritis et qualitatibus singulorum etiam fata determinat.

“What therefore else is fate, but the sentence which God pronounces with regard to every one of us? who, as he knows before-hand our frame, the materials of which we are composed, determines, according to our deserts and qualities, the fate or condition of every individual.”

Tho' the difference betwixt *these* be apparent, the one nevertheless depends on the other; since the order of Destiny is but an emanation from the simplicity or unity of Providence. For as a workman, who has formed in his head the plan of a work which he is desirous to finish, executes it afterwards, and produces in process of time all the different parts of the model which he has conceived; so God, in the plan of his Providence, disposes every thing to be brought about, in a certain order and in a proper time; and afterwards, by the ministry of Destiny, he accomplishes what he has thus planned, in conformity to that order and that time. Whether it be by the agency of spirits*, attendants upon Providence,

* "Whether it be by the agency of spirits, attendants upon Providence, that Destiny operates, or by a soul, or by the ministry of the whole frame of nature, or by the influence of the stars, or by the power of angels, or the unwearied industry of demons; or whether it be by any one of these, or by all of them together, that the chain of Destiny is formed."—What Boethius means by the agency of spirits, attendants upon Providence, as distinct from the angels, I do not understand.—By a soul, he probably means the soul of the world, according to Plato: for it was Plato's opinion, that God, who designed the universe should be as perfect as possible, animated it with a soul or spirit to govern it, to repress the discord of the elements, and to preserve harmony in it.—"By the ministry of the whole frame of nature."—Boethius, in allusion to the doctrine of the Stoicks, understands by this, the divine reason extending over all the works of the universe, or that law of God's providence by which he governs the world, λόγος, καθ' ον ὁ κόσμος διαχρηταί.—Diog. Laert. L. vii. § 149.—"By the influence of the stars:"—"Most men," says Pliny, in his 2d Book of Natural History, 'believe that their destiny depends upon
the

providence, that Destiny operates, or by a soul, or by the ministry of the whole frame of nature, or by the influence of the stars, or by the power of angels, or the unwearied industry of demons; or whether it be by any one of these things, or by all of them together, that the chain of Destiny is formed; it is evident Providence is the invincible, the simple, and uncompounded train of conducting every thing; and that Destiny is the fluctuating contexture and temporal arrangement of those things which Providence has ordained to be done. Hence it appears, that the things subordinate to Destiny, are also under the dominion of Providence, which controls and rules Destiny itself: whereas there are some things placed under the immediate direction of Providence, which are exempted from the jurisdiction of Fate; and these are such as are placed near to the Divinity himself; the stability of which, upon that account, is so great, that they are not affected with the movements of Destiny.—To

‘ the influence of the star that presided at their birth.’ ‘ This opinion,’ he adds, ‘ has made a great progress, not only among the ignorant, but even among the learned.’ It was, in fact, an opinion that almost universally prevailed for many ages. Hence judicial astrology, or the art of foretelling things by the stars, was heretofore studied and held in the highest esteem; but is now deservedly contemned and exploded.—“ By the power of angels, or the industry of the demons.” —By the angels we are to understand the inferior gods and good genii of the Platonists and Stoicks; and by the demons are meant the evil genii of these philosophers.

comprehend my idea, figure to yourself several globes revolving round one common centre. Now, that which is innermost, as it approaches nearest to the *simplicity of the middle point*, or centre, becomes itself as it were a centre to the globes placed without it, round which they roll; whilst the outermost of them, revolving in a wider circumference the farther it is from the centre, describes a larger space; but if this outermost sphere, or any thing whatever, should be joined and annexed to the middle point, you must allow it will partake of its simplicity and stability, and will lose that tendency to motion and change, which all things more remote from the centre are condemned to.— By a like manner of reasoning, we conclude, that the further any thing is removed from the first Intelligence, it is so much the more under the controul of Destiny; whereas, on the contrary, the nearer any thing approaches to that Intelligence, which is the centre of all things, it becomes more stable, and less dependent upon Destiny. And if we suppose that the thing in question is joined to the immutability of the Supreme Intelligence, it then becomes immoveable, and does not at all depend upon the necessity of fate. Therefore, as reasoning is to the understanding; as that which is produced is to that which exists of itself; as time is to eternity; and as the circumference to the center; so is the moveable order of

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Destiny

Destiny to the stable simplicity of Providence. It is this chain of destiny which moves the heavens and the stars, which preserves the harmony that reigns among the elements, and causes them to assume forms infinitely varied. It is this which renews every thing that is once produced, by preserving the fecundity of sexes and of seeds. It is this likewise that constrains the actions and fortunes of men, by causes, the connection whereof cannot be broken; which, as they derive their origin from an immoveable Providence, must, like it, be also immoveable. In this manner are all things well conducted, as the simplicity residing in the divine understanding produces that invariable order of causes; and this order, by its own inherent immutability, restrains things in their nature mutable, and preserves them from all irregular wandering and fluctuation.—Hence, to ignorant mortals, who cannot comprehend this order, things appear irregular and confused; the condition of all things nevertheless is such, that they are directed and impelled by it to their good: for there is nothing done merely for the sake of evil, even by the wicked themselves, who in their researches after good, as I have clearly proved to you, are led astray from it by delusive error; but in no wise by that pure order which flows from the centre of the Supreme Goodness, which cannot possibly mislead any creature from its origin. But you may perhaps say, How can there be a
more

more unequal distribution of events, than that prosperous and calamitous things should be alternately dealt to the virtuous; whilst the wicked are, in like manner, delighted with the enjoyment of what they wish, and anon distressed with the evils which they abhor? But what then? Can you affirm that men's understandings are so infallible as to discover whether those whom they believe virtuous or wicked, are so in reality? You know well that their judgments differ widely upon this point; and that persons, who by some are thought worthy of a reward, are by others deemed deserving of punishment. But let us suppose that a man could with certainty distinguish the good from the bad; we must suppose him in this case able to explore the frame and contexture of the human mind, with the same accuracy as anatomists do that of the body: for without this knowledge, it would be as impossible for him to distinguish men of worth from their opposites, as it would be for one ignorant of the art of physic to say why bitter aliments agree with some men's constitutions, and sweet with those of others; or why certain maladies are relieved by lenitives, and others by powerful remedies. Though these effects be surprizing to the ignorant, they are not so to the physician who knows the constitution of the human body, the causes of diseases, and their cures. But what, I
pray

pray you, constitutes the health of the mind, but virtue? and whence are its maladies derived, but from vice? Who is it that diffuses blessings upon mankind and saves them from evil, but God alone, who is the guide and physician of souls? who, from the exalted observatory of his Providence, beholds all the wants of his creation, sees what is necessary to every individual, and bestows it upon them. From this source is derived that wonderful miracle, *the order of destiny*; a miracle wrought by the wisdom of God, which astonishes ignorant mortals. But let us now discourse a little upon the few things which our feeble reason permits us to know of the profound abyss of the Divinity. The man whom you esteem the most just, and the strictest observer of equity, appears otherwise to the eye of that Providence who knoweth every thing. Lucan, our pupil, in his *Pharsalia*, says,

Tho' Heav'n declar'd on the victorious side,
The vanquish'd cause by Cato was embrac'd.

Be persuaded then, that whatever you see done here contrary to your expectations and wishes, is in consequence of a good order established over all nature, although to your apprehension it may appear the effect of irregular confusion. Let us suppose a man of such pure and exemplary morals, that he is equally agreeable to God and
men,

men, but not endued with a sufficient strength of mind; so that upon a small reverse of fortune, he might perhaps forego his probity, finding that it cannot preserve him in a state of prosperity. The wisdom of God, therefore, knowing that adversity might destroy this man's integrity, graciously averts from him calamities which he is not able to sustain. Another, again, is so thoroughly virtuous, that in the sanctity of his life he approaches in some measure to the purity of the Deity; Providence is so far from distressing such a person with the evils of life, that it even exempts him from its diseases: for, as one more excellent than I am, has observed *, *the Virtues build up the body of the holy man*. But to return; Providence often entrusts the direction of public affairs to men of worth, that the outrageous malignities of the wicked may be curbed and restrained. To some she distributes a mixture of good and evil, as what is best adapted to the disposition of their minds. To some again she gives a check by moderate afflictions, lest they grow wanton and unruly by a continued flow of prosperity; whilst she involves others in the most perplexing distresses and difficulties, that their virtues may

* Interpreters are at a loss about the person here referred to. Some imagine that it is the great Egyptian philosopher Hermes Trismegistus. Others suppose that Philosophy alludes to some eminent saint or christian divine endowed with the Holy Spirit, because she mentioned him as a person more excellent than herself.

be exercised and strengthened by the practice of patience. Many are intimidated without cause, at the prospect of what they can easily sustain. Others rashly despise what they are altogether unable to bear; and to render such sensible of their ill-grounded presumption, God often punishes them with calamities. Some have acquired immortal renown by a glorious death. Others, by their unshaken constancy in torments, have exhibited examples that virtue cannot be vanquished. Now, that all these events are the effects of a just and well-regulated order of things, and that they promote the good of the persons to whom they befall, will not admit of a doubt. For the same reasons it happens, that adversity is at one time the lot of the wicked, and prosperity at another. That bad men are distressed with evils is a surprize to none, because all are of opinion, they justly merit punishment; besides, what they suffer is of use to amend themselves, and to deter others from wickedness: that good things, on the other hand, fall to their share, is a lesson to the virtuous; teaching them how little these external advantages ought to be prized, which are often bestowed upon the most profligate of mortals. Another reason for dispensing worldly advantages to the wicked, is, that perhaps the dispositions of some of them are naturally so violent and rapacious, that indigence would prompt them to commit the greatest enormities: Providence therefore makes

makes use of abundance, as a remedy, to prevent them from falling into such misery. Further; such a person is stung with the reproach of a guilty conscience, and perceiving that he cannot persist in his iniquitous courses, and retain his riches; he is therefore under dismal apprehensions at the prospect of losing what he enjoys with so much pleasure, and is upon that account led to a change of manners; the fear of forfeiting his fortune, engaging him to relinquish his wickedness. Another, again, by managing his prosperous fortune unworthily, precipitates himself into deserved misery. To some bad men, in fine, Providence imparts the power of inflicting punishments, with a view both to chastise other wicked persons, and to exercise the fortitude of the good: for as there is no concord betwixt the virtuous and the wicked; so neither can the vicious agree with one another. And how should they? as they are at perpetual war with themselves; their crimes fitting so heavy upon their consciences, that there is scarce any thing they do but they afterwards disapprove. Hence arises a signal miracle brought about by Divine Providence, that the wicked often reform their brethren in iniquity, and render them good; for these latter having suffered injuries from the former, their resentment excites them to become virtuous themselves, that they may no more bear any resemblance to persons whom they so thoroughly detest. Thus we see,
that

that it is the power of Deity alone that can draw good out of evil, over-rule it for his own purposes, and deduce from it beneficial consequences. For in all God's works, we may plainly perceive that there is a fixed order which comprehends every thing that exists: so that if any thing departs from the particular arrangement wherein it is placed, it must necessarily fall under another establishment; as in the realms of Providence, the caprice and irregularity of chance has no dominion. But after all, as the poet observes, it is difficult to unfold what relates to the Divinity. In fact, it is presumptuous in man to attempt to comprehend the whole œconomy of the sovereign of the universe; and still more so, to endeavour to explain it in words. Let it satisfy us to know, that God, who formed all beings, disposes and directs them to good; and that, while he retains every thing he has created, in an order worthy of his unerring wisdom, he makes use of that chain of destiny which he hath established, to banish every evil from the immense circuit of his empire. If you will therefore contemplate with attention the conduct of Providence, you will be convinced that the evils which seem to overflow the universe, exist only in your own imagination. But I now perceive that you are confounded and exhausted with the length of my reasoning, and with the intricacy

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BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

and obscurity of these disquisitions; and that you are impatiently expecting relief from the harmony of my numbers. Let us therefore interrupt the course of our arguments, and strive to sooth and refresh your mind with pleasing and melodious strains; that it may be brought into a proper frame to comprehend what still remains to be discussed.

Studious of matters great and high,
Wouldst thou the thund'rer's pow'r explore,
Survey the spacious vaulted sky
With glowing stars bespangled o'er.

Whilst man's frail race quick wastes away,
Unchang'd these wond'rous orbs endure,
Roll ceaseless on in fair array,
By laws conducted wise and sure.

Faithful the sun returns each day,
All nature quick'ning with his light;
The moon succeeds with milder ray,
And gladdens and adorns the night.

Nightly, the beaming pole around,
The northern Bear conducts his train,
Nor strays from his appointed bound,
To rest him in the rolling main.

Fair

Fair Vesper, to his office true,
At eve renews with light his horn;
And shaking from his locks the dew,
Bright Phosphor ushers in the morn.

Kept firm by love's eternal chain,
Th' ethereal lamps their rounds revolve;
No strife disturbs the radiant train,
No force their concord can dissolve.

What—but this energy divine
Such jarring elements could tame;
Such opposites in union join,
As form the world's harmonious frame?

The humid atoms war no more
With dry, nor heat with cold contends;
Th' aspiring flame delights to soar,
Whilst down the sluggish earth descends.

Goodness supreme the seasons leads;—
In Spring the balmy zephyr blows,
And strait the field its verdure spreads;
Their beauties Flora's race disclose.

Summer conducts the sultry hours,
And ripens Ceres' golden grain;
With plenty crown'd kind Autumn pours
His stores, and glads the laughing swain.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Earth's fruitful lap stern Winter bares,
 His snows descend, his tempests blow ;
 The glebe his nitrous frosts prepares,
 Abundant harvests to bestow.

The seasons, in succession fair,
 Give life and growth to all that breathe ;—
 Progressive seasons unaware
 Revolve ;—they perish all by death.

Meanwhile, th' Eternal sits serene
 Upon his everlasting throne ;
 Whose power almighty form'd this scene
 Of things at first, and rules alone :

Sole source of goodness and of grace,
 Of truth and right th' unerring cause,
 Who knits and tames man's wayward race,
 By order, government, and laws :

Whose boundless, all-pervading soul,
 Impels, and checks, and rules at will
 The motions of *th' amazing whole*,
 And turns to good each seeming ill.

Did not his secret-working hand
 Give every wheel its round to know ;
 Did he not every spring command,
 This world would soon a chaos grow.

See

See then the universal chain
 That all connects—Almighty Love!
 See urg'd by this, how all again
 Press to that center whence they move!

Do you now perceive, continued she, the consequence that flows from all that we have been reasoning upon?—What is it?—That all fortune is absolutely good.—How is that possible?—Since all fortune, said she, whether agreeable or vexatious, is employed, either to reward or exercise the good, or to punish and correct the bad: every event therefore which can befall a man must be good, as it is clearly either just or useful.—What you say is true; and if I consider Providence and Destiny as you have represented them to me, I shall find your reasoning well founded. But let us, notwithstanding, put this opinion, if you please, among the number of those positions, which you formerly supposed were incredible. But why should we do that?—Because there is no phrase, said I, more common and frequent among men, than that the fortune of such a person is bad.—Would you then wish, added she, that we should conform for a moment to the language of the vulgar, lest we seem to depart too much from the manner of conceiving and expressing things familiar among men?—Do as you please.—Do you think, said she, that every thing that is useful is good?—Certainly.—Every fortune, then, or con-

All fortune, whether prosperous or adverse, is good.

dition of life, which either exercises or corrects, is useful.—To this I agree.—Consequently, every fortune which exercises and corrects, is good.—Unquestionably it is.—But this is evidently the fortune of all, who, by adhering to virtue, have adversity to combat with; or by relinquishing vice, pursue the road of virtue.—I must allow that it is.—But with regard to that prosperous fortune, which is dispensed to the worthy as a reward; do the vulgar think it bad?—Not at all; they believe it very good, as it is in reality.—Once more; Do they believe the calamities good, that punish the wicked, and restrain the course of their malice?—On the contrary, answered I, they look upon them as the most miserable events that can possibly be imagined.—But let us take care, added she, lest by adhering to the opinion of the vulgar, we have not involved ourselves in a new consequence that is incredible.—What consequence is that?—Does it not clearly follow, from the concessions formerly made, that the fortune of all, who have either acquired virtue, or are striving to acquire it, and to make a progress in it, must necessarily be good; but that the fortune of such as persist in vice must be wretched in the highest degree?—The consequence is just, answered I, though there are none who have the courage to confess it.—But why, added she, do they not? since the wise man ought surely to be as undejected, when he is brought into

into the field to wage war with fortune, as the brave man is undismayed with the din of arms, and the tumultuous uproar of the battle: as the dangers of war open to the one a field to acquire glory; so the difficulties which he has to encounter, present the other with an opportunity of exercising and displaying his wisdom. Thus virtue, as we learn from the etymology of the word *, is no other thing than a power relying upon its own proper strength, which surmounts and conquers every opposing obstacle. Let it be your business, then, my pupil, who have made such a progress in virtue; let it be your particular care not to place your happiness in luxury, nor to suffer yourself to be enervated with pleasure. You have a perpetual war to carry on against both fortunes; with the bad lest it dismay you, with the good lest it corrupt you. Seize then the *golden mean* †, so essential to happi-

* *Virtus*, the Latin word, whence virtue is taken, is derived from *virtus*, which signifies strength.

† To this Horace exhorts:

Auream quisquis mediocritatem
Diligit, tutus caret obsoleto
Sordibus tecti, caret invidenda
Sobrius aula.

The man within the golden mean,
Who can his boldest wish contain,
Securely views the ruin'd cell
Where fordid want and sorrow dwell;
And in himself serenely great,
Declines an envied room of state.

FRANCIS.

ness, and retain it with all your might. Whoever soars above, or descends below this line, acquires nothing but a contemptible felicity, and unworthy of his labour. To conclude, it depends upon yourself to choose what fortune you please: but let this maxim be remembered, that every fortune which is called adverse, unless it exercises or amends, always punishes.

To punish Paris' guilty flame,
 And vindicate his brother's shame,
 Ten tedious years imperial Troy
 Atrides battled to destroy.
 At Aulis, whilst the Chief deplores
 His fleet, detain'd on Grecian shores,
 To waft to Troy his num'rous sails
 With blood he bought propitious gales:
 Diana's vengeance to remove,
 The parent from his heart he drove,
 And weeping saw his daughter's breast
 Pierc'd by the dagger of the priest.
 Whilst giant Polyphemus tore
 Ulysses' mates, and swill'd their gore;
 The Chief, benevolent and wise,
 Their fate laments with streaming eyes:
 But soon as by his matchless sleight,
 The Cyclops wail'd his loss of sight,
 He joy'd to hear the monster roar,
 And shake Sicilia's startled shore.

The

The great Alcides' deathless name
 His labours consecrate to fame *.—
 The Centaurs fierce he first o'erthrew;
 Next,—the Nemean lion slew,
 And wore, a trophy of his toil,
 The dreadful creature's shaggy spoil:
 His arrows pierce the Harpies dire;
 He kill'd the dragon, breathing fire †;
 And bore his dearly purchas'd prey,
 The glitt'ring golden fruit, away:
 Cerberian fury he restrains,
 And leads the monster-dog in chains:
 The mangled corse of Diomede ‡
 He gave the tyrant's colts to feed:
 The horrid Hydra to his ire
 A victim falls,—subdued by fire:
 His front dishonour'd, struck with shame,
 Sad Achelous || glides a stream,

Nor

* Philosophy teaches, by the example of Hercules, the son of Jupiter and Alcmena, that heaven and immortality are not to be obtained but by many labours and difficulties. In this poem the twelve famous labours of Hercules are pointed out; most of which are so well known, that it is needless to make remarks upon them: for who has not heard of the Centaurs, of the Nemean lion, of the Harpies, of the dog Cerberus, and of Cacus?

† The daughters of Hesperus, a king in Africa, had a garden planted with trees producing golden apples, guarded by a dragon breathing fire; this monster Hercules slew, and carried the fruit to Euristheus his father-in-law.

‡ Diomede, a king of Thrace, was so cruel, that he fed his horses with human flesh. Hercules slew this tyrant, and gave him to be devoured by his own horses.

|| Achelous, the son of Oceanus and Tethys, fought with Hercules for

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Nor dares *the matchless hero* face,
 But tells in murmurs his disgrace :
 Antæus, next, his arms comprest,
 And squeez'd to death *the struggling pest* † :
 Then, storming villain Cacus' cave,
 He freed his herds, and slew the slave :
 The hero's shoulders, soon to bear
 The weight of the celestial sphere,
 The slaughter'd Erymanthian boar ‡
 Defiles with horrid foam and gore :
 In fine, when Atlas ¶ wail'd his fate,
 Of heav'n's whole frame to bear the weight,

for Deianira, the daughter of Oeneus, king of Calydonea ; but as he was inferior to the hero in strength, Achelous turned himself first into a serpent, and afterwards into a bull ; in which latter form Hercules attacked him, and cut off his horn, which became the horn of plenty. Achelous, ashamed to appear with one horn, converted himself into a river of Epirus, called after him.

† Antæus, the son of Neptune and the Earth, a giant of prodigious strength, who, when he was knocked down by Hercules, immediately received new strength from his mother. Hercules was therefore obliged to hold him up in his arms and squeeze him to death.

‡ The boar of Mount Erymanthus of Arcadia, which was so large and fierce that it had almost depopulated the whole country. Hercules rid the world of this monster.

¶ Atlas was a king of Mauritania, and a great astronomer, and was therefore said to bear the heavens upon his shoulders. Hercules is fabled to have eased him of his burden for one day ; and merited, as the poets relate, by this his last and noblest labour, to be admitted into the society of the gods.—King Atlas, the poets say, was changed into a mountain of Africa that bears his name, which, from its amazing height, seems to support the heavens. The extent of the Atlantean mountains is very great, reaching through far the greatest part of Africa, from the Atlantic Ocean (so called from this mountain) to the deserts of Barca,

Th

Th' enormous load his back receiv'd ;
And Atlas of his toil reliev'd.

Such were the paths the hero trod ;
These labours rais'd him to a God !

Rouse, mortals, rouse ; pursue his plan ;
Go,—imitate the wond'rous man :
Let nought your dauntless souls dismay ;
Rush on, where virtue leads the way ;
In glorious deeds exulting rise,
And soar triumphant to the skies,

B O O K V.

Philosophy defines Chance.—She explains wherein freedom of will consists.—She solves the old objection against Providence, by proving that the prescience of God neither binds man's will, nor destroys human liberty.

WHEN she had thus finished, and was about to turn her discourse to the illustration and discussion of other matters, I interrupted her.—Your exhortation is salutary and beneficial, and becomes your authority: but I now find by experience, that the question in respect to Providence is, as you observed, involved with many others: I am therefore desirous of knowing, whether there is any such thing as Chance, and what you think it is.—I am hastening, replied she, to acquit myself of my promise, and to lay open the road, which will assuredly conduct you to your native country: and tho' the matters
you

you are inquisitive about, be well deserving of your knowledge; yet, as they lie a little out of the way to the goal we have in view, I am apprehensive that by making so wide a circuit, you will be too much fatigued to hold out to the end of your journey.—Don't be afraid of that, said I; for to learn those things that are so delightfully instructing, will be more refreshing to me than rest itself: besides, as these questions have a connexion with your subject, when they are explained, your discourse being cleared from every difficulty, will rest on the basis of unquestionable truth, and it will not be possible for me to retain any doubt in relation to what shall remain to be discussed.—Your importunate desires shall be gratified; and thus she immediately proceeded:

If Chance is defined an event produced by motion, operating without design, and not by a chain or connexion of causes, I should then affirm it to be nothing; and, except as a word serving to express what we are reasoning about, I pronounce it an empty sound, without any real signification.—For how can any thing happen without design, when all events, through the influence of Almighty Power, are restrained by order? That from nothing, nothing can proceed, is an axiom, the truth of which none of the antients ever called in question: tho' this axiom be true, only as it relates to all created existences, but by no means true as it respects their efficient cause. Now if
any

Philosophy
defines
Chance.

any thing arises without the operation of a cause, it must proceed from nothing; but as this is evidently impossible, Chance is not therefore what it is asserted to be in the foregoing definition.—What, says I, is there nothing fortuitous? nothing that may be called Chance? is not there any thing, tho' concealed from the apprehensions of the vulgar, to which these appellations may be applied?—Aristotle, my disciple, replied she, has in his Physicks explained this question with much precision and probability.—“If any thing,” says he, “is done for a particular end or purpose, but if a certain concurrence of causes produces some other thing than was intended, it is called Chance.—For instance, if a labourer in digging a piece of ground, with a view to improve it, discovers a concealed treasure, this is said to happen by chance: but this discovery of the labourer does not spring from nothing; it arises from particular causes; the unforeseen and unexpected concurrence of which brings about the event. For if the labourer had not trenched the ground, and the person who concealed the treasure had not buried it in that very spot, it had not been discovered.” These then are the causes of this fortuitous acquisition: from these alone it arose, and not from any intention of the human will. For it was not the design, either of the person who hid the treasure, nor of him who laboured the ground, that

that this discovery should have been made. But as I just now said, the one finding it convenient to dig, where the other had concealed the money, by the concurrence of these two causes, the former obtained the prize. Chance may be therefore defined, *an unexpected event, by a concurrence of causes, following an action designed for a particular purpose.* Now, this concurrence of causes is the effect of that necessary order, which streams from the pure fountain of Providence, and disposes every thing in its proper time and place.

Where flying Parthians pierce th' astonish'd foe
With deathful shafts; from lofty Taurus'
side *,
The rapid Tigris, and Euphrates flow,
And o'er the desert pour one current wide.

But soon the streams divided trace their way,
And winding on, in separate channels glide;
Thro' sandy wastes and peopled realms they
stray,
Till, join'd again, they pour a mighty tide.

* It was supposed by the ancients, that the Tigris and the Euphrates issued from the same source, Mount Taurus, and poured along in one current; but that this current afterwards was divided into two separate streams: this is now found not to be the case. The sources of these rivers are distant from one another about 250 miles. After encompassing the ancient Mesopotamia and Babylonia, these rivers join their streams, and flow together into the Persian Gulph.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Whate'er th' impetuous rivers bore along,
 Boats, ships, and trees, now in their blended
 stream
 Are dash'd and huddl'd in tumultuous throng,
 And by blind Chance the currents guided
 seem.

But Chance capricious holds no empire here ;
 The rolling rivers Nature's laws obey ;—
 Declining still, their downward tracks they steer,
 And lighter bodies in their streams convey.

They mix, and separate, and unite again,
 By Sovereign Wisdom taught their beds to
 know : —

Rest then in this ; Chance holds no ruling rein,
 But kind intention governs all below.

Philosophy
 explains
 wherein
 Freedom
 of will
 consists.

I understand you perfectly, said I, and assent to the truth of what you advance : but in this indissoluble chain of causes, can we preserve the liberty of the will ? Does this fatal Necessity restrain the motions of the human soul ?—There is no reasonable being, replied she, who has not freedom of will : for every being distinguished with this faculty is endowed with judgment to perceive the differences of things ; to discover what he is to avoid or pursue. Now what a person esteems desirable, he desires ; but what he thinks ought to be avoided, he shuns. Thus every

every rational creature hath a liberty of chusing and rejecting. But I do not assert, that this liberty is equal in all beings. Heavenly substances, who are exalted above us, have an enlightened judgment, an incorruptible will, and a power ever at command effectually to accomplish their desires. With regard to man, his immaterial spirit is also free; but it is most at liberty, when employed in the contemplation of the divine mind; it becomes less so, when it enters into a body*; and is still more restrained, when it is imprisoned in a terrestrial habitation, composed of members of clay; and is reduced, in fine, to the most extreme servitude, when by plunging into the pollutions of vice, it totally departs from reason: for the soul no sooner turns her eye from the radiance of supreme truth, to dark and base objects, but she is involved in a mist of ignorance, assailed by impure desires, by yielding to which, she encreases her thralldom; and thus the freedom which she derives from nature, becomes in some measure the cause of her slavery. But the eye of Providence, which sees every thing from eternity, perceives all this; and that same Providence disposes every thing she has predestinated, in the order it deserves. As Homer

* "It becomes less so when it enters into a body."—Boethius reasons here according to the opinion of Plato, who believed in the pre-existence of souls; and that the same soul might animate a variety of bodies, differing greatly in degrees of purity.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

says of the sun, it sees every thing, and hears every thing*.

Homer, in mellifluous lays,
Sings the sun's all-piercing rays.—
Phœbus' beams, whom men adore,
Only stream the surface o'er,
Reach not Tellus' hidden caves,
Pierce not Ocean's rolling waves.

But th' Eternal from on high,
With his all-perceiving eye,
Sees his wide creation through—
Starting open to his view ;
(While her sable mantles, Night
Vainly spreads to bar his sight)
Darteth He, with piercing ray,
Where Sol's beams can never stray ;
Sees—what's hid in earth's dark caves,
Sees—what lurks beneath the waves :
All events at once doth see,
Present, past, and what shall be.

Him the Sun then rightly call—
God, who sees and lightens all.

* Epictetus in Arrian says, And is not God capable of surveying all things, and being present with all, and receiving a certain communication from all ? Is the sun capable of illuminating so great a portion of the universe, and of leaving only that small part of it unilluminated, which is covered by the shadow of the earth ? and cannot he who made and revolves the sun, a small part of himself, if compared with the whole ; cannot he perceive all things ?

Mrs. Carter's Translation, B. I. c. xiv. l. 2.

But

* But now, said I, a difficulty arises, which perplexes me more than all the foregoing.—What is that? though I believe I can guess the cause of your perplexity.—God's foreknowledge of all events, answered I, seems to me altogether inconsistent with the free-will of man: for if God foresees all things, and cannot possibly be deceived, then, that which he foresees to happen in future, must necessarily happen: if from eternity God had foreseen not only the actions of men, but their designs and wills, there would be no liberty of choice; as in this case men have it not in their power to do any action, nor to form any will, but those which have been foreseen by God's infallible Providence. In fact, if things could be wrested in such a manner, as to happen otherwise than they have been foreseen, the prescience of God, in regard to futurity, would not be sure and unerring; it would be nothing more than an uncertain opinion: but I esteem it impious to entertain such an idea of God; nor do I at all approve the reasoning made use of by some, for the solution of this perplexing question. "Things, say they, do not necessarily befall, because the Divine Providence hath foreseen they

• Hence, to the end of the book, Boethius discusses the famous question relative to the prescience of God, and the freedom of the human will. He treats this subject at length; and proves by ingenious, and at least plausible, arguments, that the foreknowledge of Deity does not bind the will of man, and destroy human liberty.

"were to happen; but rather, because they
 "were to happen, Providence could not be ig-
 "norant of them." Now by this way of
 reasoning, the necessity appears as it were to
 change sides: for it is not necessary, according to
 their opinion, that the things which are foreseen
 should happen; but it is necessary, however, that
 the things which are to befall should be foreseen;
 as if the question was, which was the cause of the
 other — prescience, of the necessity of future
 events; or the necessity, of the prescience of future
 events. But I shall now endeavour to de-
 monstrate, that in whatever way the chain of
 causes is disposed, the event of things which are
 foreseen is necessary; although prescience may
 not appear to be the necessitating cause of their
 befalling. For example; if a person sits, the opinion
 formed of him that he is seated, is of necessity
 true: but by inverting the phrase, if the opinion
 is true that he is seated, he must necessarily sit.
 In both cases then there is a necessity; in the
 latter, that the person sits; in the former, that
 the opinion concerning him is true: but the
 person doth not sit, because the opinion of his
 sitting is true; but the opinion is rather true,
 because the action of his being seated was ante-
 cedent in time. Thus tho' the truth of the
 opinion may be the effect of the person taking a
 seat, there is nevertheless a necessity common to
 both. The same method of reasoning, I think,
 should

should be employed with regard to the prescience of God, and future contingencies: for allowing it to be true, that events are foreseen, because they are to happen, and that they do not befall because they are foreseen; it is still necessary, that what is to happen must be foreseen by God, and that what is foreseen must take place. This then is of itself sufficient to destroy all idea of human liberty. But it is preposterous thus to attribute the eternal prescience of God to the event of temporal things: for what difference is there in imagining, that God doth foresee future events because they are to happen; and to suppose that what hath actually happened in time past was the cause of his sovereign prescience? Moreover, as a thing necessarily is, when I know it be, so it will necessarily be when I know it is; the event therefore of a thing foreseen, must necessarily befall. Lastly, if a person supposes a thing different from what it is; this is not a knowledge of the thing in question, but a false opinion of it, widely distant from the truth of science: if a thing were therefore to befall in such a way, that the event of it is neither necessary nor certain; how can any one foresee that it is to happen? For as what we really do know is free from all uncertainty, so what is comprehended by science cannot be otherwise than as comprehended: hence it is that true science cannot err, because every thing must precisely be what her eye perceives it

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

to be. What then is the consequence that flows from this? How does God foreknow these uncertain contingencies? For if he thinks a thing will inevitably happen, which possibly may not, he is deceived; which one can neither believe, nor say of God, without blasphemy. But if he perceives that things will happen according to their casual circumstances; if he knows that they either may or may not take place; what sort of prescience is this, which comprehends nothing certain, nothing invariable? May it not be well compared with the ridiculous divination of Tiresias? *Whatever I say, either shall or shall not be**.—In what, tell me, is the prescience of God superior to the opinion of men, if, like them, he judges with uncertainty in regard to things, the event whereof is not fixed? But if there can be nothing uncertain in his knowledge, who is

* Tiresias was a blind prophet or soothsayer of Thebes. Boethius takes this ridiculous divination from Horace, who, to ridicule the foolish credulity of the Romans of his time, upon the article of divination, makes Tiresias reply to Ulysses, who was consulting him;

O Laertiade! quidquid dicam, aut erit, aut non,
Divinare etenim magnus mihi donat Apollo.

HOR. SAT. L. II. SAT. 5.

O son of great Laertes! *every thing*
shall come to pass, or never, as I sing;
For Phœbus, monarch of the tuneful Nine,
Informs my soul, and gives me to divine.

FRANCIS.

the

the source of all certainty, the event of all things, which he assuredly foreknows, must be fixed and inevitable. Whence it follows, that there can be no liberty, neither in the designs nor in the actions of men; because the Divine mind, endowed with an infallible foresight, constrains and binds them to a certain event. But if this be granted, how great is the confusion, how miserable the distraction that hence springs up in human affairs? For it would be to no purpose to propose rewards or punishments to the good or the bad, when both of them are deprived of liberty, and when the will does not influence their actions. Rewards and punishments, which are now considered as both reasonable and equitable, would then become very unjust; when it is allowed that mankind are not prompted by the determinations of their wills to virtue and vice, but in all their conduct compelled by a fatal necessity. If things were so constituted, there would be neither virtue nor vice; but such a preposterous mixture of the one and the other, as would produce the most horrid and shocking confusion. Now, this is the most impious idea that can possibly enter into the human mind. From such extravagant principles,—that man has not the freedom of choice,—and that every event is disposed and constrained by Divine prescience,—we are forced to conclude, that all our vices ought to be ascribed solely to God; to that Being, who is the source of every virtue, and

of all goodness. Supposing this the case, it will be of no use either to hope or to pray for any thing; for why should men do either, when all they can desire is irreversibly predestined? Hope and prayer, becoming thus ineffectual, the only intercourse betwixt God and the human race is cut off: for as by offering up our supplications with due reverence and humility, we merit the inestimable reward of the Divine grace and counsel; so it is by means of prayer, even before our requests are granted, that we seem to associate, as it were, with the Deity, and to unite ourselves to that inaccessible light. But if a fixed irrevocable necessity of future events is admitted, prayer can have no effect; and what other way is there then left, wherewith we can be connected with the sovereign author and disposer of all things? Man therefore, as you formerly observed, being thus detached and disunited from the source of his existence, must sink into nothing.

That God doth all events foresee—
 That every human act is free—
 Are truths, when sep'rate, plain and clear;
 But join'd,—perplex'd and dark appear.
 Declare then, what discordant cause
 Puzzles and clouds perspicuous laws?
 Can things indisputably true
 Involve an inconsistency too?

Who

Who can the Gordian knot unloose,
And this deep mystery disclose ?

‘The Heav’n-born mind, perhaps, you’ll say,
Encumber’d with this load of clay,
Cannot perceive the secret ties
Of things, and nice dependencies.—

Why does she then with ardour glow,
Matters beyond her reach to know ?
Knows she the secret she would gain ?
Then sure—she would not toil in vain,
If, weak and blind, she knows it not,
Why gropes she for she knows not what ?
None wish for what they never knew,
Nor matters wholly hid pursue.—
But grant,—that after search profound
She finds it;—can she say ’tis found ?
Each mark unknown of what she fought,
Dares she assert—the prize is got ?

The soul at first, then, shall we say,
Illum’d with a celestial ray,
From Wisdom’s beaming source that springs,
Knew all the secret chains of things :—
But sent from Heav’n’s pure light to dwell
In this corporeal sluggish cell ;
Tho’ clouds *the intellectual bright*
O’ercast, and dim her native light,
Clear marks of her celestial strain,
And Heav’n-taught knowledge, still remain ;
Truth’s outlines fair are still impress’d
Distinctly on the human breast ;

Tho’

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

Tho' individuals are forgot,
The sum of things unknown is not.

In Science, [then, who strive to grow,
Studious reflect on what they know,
And calm investigate again
The truths their minds did once retain.

Hence learn they to philosophize,
And open Nature's mysteries.

Solution of
objection
against
Provi-
dence, that
God's pre-
science de-
stroys hu-
man liber-
ty.

This, said she, is the old objection against Providence, so acutely handled by Cicero, in his Book of Divination, and so often anxiously enquired into by yourself; of which neither of you, nor any person whatever, has been able to give a satisfying solution. The cause of this mystery is, that the human understanding cannot conceive the simplicity of the prescience of God; for if it were possible to comprehend this, every difficulty would immediately vanish. I shall therefore first consider the matters that give you uneasiness, and shall then try to explain and solve this perplexing question. I ask you then, Wherefore you do not approve the reasoning of such as think, "That prescience does not obstruct the liberty of the will, because it is not "the necessitating cause of future events?" Do you draw any argument of the necessity of what shall happen in future, but from this proposition, "That those things which are foreseen, must necessarily befall?"—But if the pre-
science

science of God imposes no necessity upon events that are to befall, as even you were inclined to confess; must not the issue of things be voluntary, and man's will free and unconstrained? To render the sequel of my reasoning the more perspicuous, let us suppose there is no prescience: Would then the events which proceed from free-will alone, and from no other source, be under the power of necessity?—No, answered I; by no means.—Again, continued she, let us admit a prescience, but that it imposes no necessity upon what is to happen; the freedom of the will, I should think, would still remain uninfluenced and intire. But although prescience, you may say, is not the necessary cause of future events, yet it is a sign that they shall necessarily happen; and hence it follows, that, although there were no prescience, future events would still be bound in the chain of necessity. But here it ought to be considered, the sign of a thing is not really the thing itself, but that it only points out what the individual is. For which reason it must be first made appear, that every thing happens by necessity, before we can conclude that prescience is the sign of this necessity: for if there be no necessity, prescience cannot be the sign of that which does not exist. To prove that nothing happens but by necessity, the arguments for this purpose must not be drawn from signs, or foreign causes; but from causes intimately connected with,

with, and belonging to this necessity.—But how is it possible, said I, that those things which are foreseen should not befall?—I do not say, replied she, that we are to entertain any doubt but the events will take place, which Providence foresees are to happen; but we are rather to believe, that although they do happen, yet that there is no necessity in the events themselves, which constrains them to do so. The truth of which I shall thus endeavour to illustrate. We behold many things done under our view, such as a coachman conducting his chariot and governing his horses, and other things of a like nature. Now, do you suppose these things are done by the compulsion of a necessity?—No, answered I; for if every thing were moved by compulsion, the effects of art would be vain and fruitless.—If things then which are doing under our eye, added she, are under no present necessity of happening; it must be admitted that these same things, before they befall, were under no necessity of taking place. It is plain, therefore, that some things befall, the event of which is altogether unconstrained by necessity. For I do not think any person will say that such things as are at present done, were not to happen before they were done. Why therefore may not things be foreseen, and not necessitated in their events? As the knowledge then of what is present imposes no necessity on things now done; so neither does the foreknowledge of what is to happen in future,

future, necessitate the things which are to take place. But you may say, you hesitate with regard to this point; whether there can be any certain foreknowledge of things, of which the event is not necessitated? For here there seems to be an evident contradiction. If things are foreseen, you may contend they are under a necessity of happening; but if their event is not necessary, they cannot possibly be foreseen, because prescience can foresee nothing but what is absolutely certain: and if things uncertain in their events are foreseen as certain, this prescience, you may maintain, is nothing more than a false opinion: for when we comprehend things differently from what they really are, we have but imperfect ideas of them, very remote from the truth of science. To this I would answer, that the cause of this mistake is, that men imagine that their knowledge is derived entirely from the nature of the things known; whereas it is quite the reverse; since things are not known from properties inherent in the object of knowledge, but by faculties residing in the perceiver.—To give you an example of this in a few words: the globular form of a body strikes the view in a different manner from what it does the touch: the eye, placed at a distance, darts its rays upon the object, and by beholding it, comprehends its form*.—On the

* Boethius here follows the opinion of the Stoicks, who imagined that vision was performed by the eye darting its rays upon the objects.

contrary,

contrary, the object cannot be distinguished by the touch, unless the hand is in contact with it, and feels it all around. Man likewise is surveyed in different ways; by the senses, by the imagination, by reason, and by * intelligence.—The senses only perceive his material figure;—the imagination perceives the external figure alone, exclusive of the matter;—reason goes further, and examining existences in general, discovers the particular species of every individual;—the eye of intelligence still rises higher; for going beyond the bounds of what is general, it surveys the *simple forms* † themselves, by its own pure and

* By intelligence, we are here to understand, as is plain from what follows, the intelligence of the Deity.

† By the simple forms, Boethius means the substantial or essential forms of the Peripateticks and the Schoolmen. Mr. Harris, in his very ingenious, elegant, and learned book, intitled, *Philosophical Arrangements*, gives the best and clearest account of these abstruse matters that is any where to be met with. He says, “Extension, figure, and organization, are the three original forms to body physical or natural; figure having respect to its external, organization to its internal, and extension being common both to one and the other. It is more than probable, that from the variation in these universal, and, as I may say, primary forms, arise most of those secondary forms, usually called *Qualities Sensible*, because they are the proper objects of our several sensations. Such are roughness and smoothness, hardness and softness, the diversities of colours, flavours, and odours, not to mention those powers of character more subtile, the powers electric, magnetic, medicinal, &c.

“Here, therefore, we may answer the question, how natural bodies are distinguished. Not a single one among them consists of materials in chaos, but of materials wrought up after the most exquisite manner,

and proper light : in which this is principally to be considered, that the higher power of perception includes the lower ; but that the latter can by no means attain to the energy of the former : for the senses cannot rise to the per-

" manner, and that conspicuous in their organisation, or in their figure, or in both.

" As, therefore, every natural body is distinguished by the differences just described ; and as these differences have nothing to do with the original matter, which being every where similar, can afford no distinctions at all ; may we not hence infer the expediency of essential forms, that every natural substance may be essentially characterised ? " " These essential forms," he adds afterwards, " mean something, which, though differing from matter, can yet never subsist without it ; something, which united with it, helps to produce every composite being ; that is to say, in other words, every natural substance in the visible world." Philosophical Arrangements, p. 38, 39, 90.

I am afraid the reader will derive small information from this short extract ; I must therefore refer him to Mr. Harris's book, in which a great deal more is said upon this subject. In the same book, p. 103. & seq. we have an account of the animating form of a natural body, which is too long to be extracted.

This doctrine of essential or substantial forms, so famous among the schoolmen, is so abstruse, that Boethius makes Philosophy declare, immediately below, that simple forms are above the conception of reason, and can only be perceived by the intelligence of Deity.

The idea of the Platonists, with regard to this matter, according to Mr. Sydenham, in his argument to the greater Hippias, was, That by form, these philosophers did not mean Nature's outward form, but some inward principle in nature, to which that outward form is owing ; a principle, whose eternal sameness is the cause of that constant similarity in general found in the forms of nature, and the individuals of the same species, through every successive generation ; a similarity as exact as if they were cast in the same mould, or stamped with the same original types.

ception of any thing but matter; nor can the imagination comprehend existences in general; neither can reason conceive simple forms: whereas intelligence, looking down as it were from above, and having conceived the form, discerns all the things which are below it, and comprehends, therefore, what does not fall within the reach of the other faculties. For she comprehends existences in general, as conceived by reason, the figure that strikes the imagination, and the matter that falls under the cognizance of the senses, without making use either of reason, or the imagination, or the senses; but she comprehends them all *formally*, i. e. by beholding their simple forms, if I may be allowed the expression, by one single effort of the mind. In the same way, reason, when she considers a thing in general, apprehends both what is perceived by the imagination and the senses, without the assistance of either. For instance, reason defines her general conception, thus, *Man is a rational creature with two feet*; which, though it be a general idea, yet every person knows that man, thus defined, is perceivable both by the imagination and the senses; notwithstanding that in this instance reason does not make use either of the imagination or the senses, but employs her own proper faculty of perception. Thus the imagination, though at first she learned by the senses to distinguish and to form figures, acts afterwards by her own power,

power, and brings all sensible objects to her view without the aid of the senses. Do you not see, then, that men attain to the knowledge of things, more by their own faculties, than by the inherent properties of the things themselves? Nor is it unreasonable that it should be so; for as judgment is the act of the person judging, it is necessary that every person should perform his own work, by his own proper faculties, and not by the aid of foreign power.

* Fallacious and obscure the lore,
By Stoick fages taught of yore :

From

* Prior, with admirable humour, describes the manner that the soul perceives external objects, in the first canto of his *Alma*, or the Progress of the Mind.

*Alma, they † strenuously maintain,
Sits cock-horse on her throne, the brain;
And from that seat of thought dispenses
Her sov'reign pleasure to the senses.
Two optick nerves, they say, she ties,
Like spectacles, across the eyes;
By which the spirits bring her word
Whene'er the balls are fix'd and stirr'd;
How quick at park and play they strike;
The duke they court, the toast they like;
And at St. James's turn their grace
From former friends, now out of place.
Wife Nature likewise, they suppose,
Has drawn two conduits down our nose;*

† i. e. The Cambridge wits.

P

Could

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

From outward objects they suppose
 A filmy substance ceaseless flows,
 Which strikes acute upon the sense,
 And that all knowledge issues thence.
 Hence, say they, Mind alone receives
 Every image it perceives ;

Could Alma else with judgment tell
 When cabbage stinks, or roses smell ?
 Or who would ask for her opinion
 Between an oyster and an onion ?
 For from most bodies, Dick, you know,
 Some little bits ask leave to flow ;
 And as thro' these canals they roll,
 Bring up a sample of the whole ;
 Like footmen running before coaches,
 To tell the inn what lord approaches.

By nerves about our palate plac'd,
 She likewise judges of the taste ;
 Else, dismal thought ! our warlike men
 Might drink thick port for fine champagne ;
 And our ill-judging wives and daughters
 Mistake small-beer for citron-waters.

Hence too, that she might better hear,
 She sets a drum at either ear ;
 And loud or gentle, harsh or sweet,
 Are but th' alarums which they beat.

Last, to enjoy her sense of feeling,
 A thing she much delights to deal in,
 A thousand little nerves she sends
 Quite to our toes and fingers' ends ;
 And these, in gratitude again,
 Return their spirits to the brain ;
 In which their figure being printed,
 As just before, I think, I hinted,
 Alma inform'd, can try the case,
 As she had been upon the place.

The

OF PHILOSOPHY.

211

The paper, thus, a blank before,
They add, is trac'd with letters o'er.

If nothing to the mind is known
By powers inherent of her own,
But passive, she th' impressions takes,
Which every outward object makes;
Reflecting like a mirror fair,
All bodies that presented are;
Say, whence deriv'd her power to pierce
Thro' all th' extended Universe?

To roam the world material o'er,
And intellectual too explore;
Whence does she arrange, compound,
And sep'rate her ideal round?
Why does she, by progression flow,
From truth to truth ascending go?
Why now to heav'n her way she wings,
Now sinks absorb'd in grov'ling things?

Such powers, so various and so strong,
Must to the heav'n-born mind belong:
They cannot, sure, existence owe
To traces which from matter flow.

But still, 'twixt matter and the mind
We plainly a connection find:
Thus—light when flashing in the eye,
Thus—thro' the ear when noises fly,
Mind instantaneous running o'er,
Of native ideas, her store,
Th' according images unites,
And blends with those which sense excites.

BOETHIUS'S CONSOLATION

For each external form, we find,
Its counterpart has in the mind.

Although there are in objects certain qualities which strike externally upon the senses, and put their instruments in motion; although the passive impression upon the body precedes the action of the mind; although, in fine, the former rouses the latter to action, and awakens the forms which rest within; yet if the perception of objects flows not from an impression made upon the mind; but if the mind is capable, however, by its powers, of distinguishing this impression acting upon the surface of the body; with how much more reason may we affirm, that beings, purely spiritual, discern things by their own light, by an act of their understanding alone, without being under any necessity of having recourse to impressions made upon them by external objects. For this reason also it is, that nature has varied the powers of knowledge which she has distributed to created beings. Thus, animals that have no motion, as fishes that are nourished in their shells and adhere to rocks, are endowed with sensation only, and have no other knowledge; whilst imagination is given to such brutes as are capable of motion, and seem naturally to desire some things, and avoid others: but Reason is the attribute of man alone, as Intelligence is that of God. Hence it is, that God's knowledge exceeds that
of

of all other beings ; as it not only comprehends what belongs to his own nature, but whatever is perceived by beings inferior to him. What would you think, if the Senses and the Imagination should oppose Reason, and endeavour to persuade her that the general ideas of things, which she believes she comprehends, are nothing ? for what falls under the cognizance of the senses and imagination, cannot be general. Perhaps you would say, either Reason judges true, that nothing is apprehended by sense ; or, since she knows many things are perceived by the sense and by the imagination, she must judge falsely, when she considers as general that which is sensible and particular. But if Reason should answer to this, that in her idea of what is general, she comprehends clearly whatever is sensible and imaginable ; but as to the senses and imagination, they cannot possibly attain to the knowledge of what is general, since their perception cannot reach beyond the material figures that strike them ; and therefore, in all matters of science, the greatest credit is due to the judgment of that guide, whose powers are the most discerning and perfect. In a controversy of this kind, ought not we, who are possessed of the powers of reason, imagination, and sense, to enlist ourselves on the side of Reason, and to espouse her cause. The case is entirely similar, when human reason thinks the divine understanding can-

not behold future events, in any other way than she herself is capable of perceiving them: for your reasoning with regard to this matter is precisely this; "That things certainly cannot be foreseen, unless their events are necessitated; therefore there can be no such thing as prescience; for if there were, every thing would be fixed by an absolute necessity." In answer to this I would say, If it were possible for us, who are endowed only with reason, to become possessed of the Divine Intelligence, we should then discover, because it is proper, that both sense and imagination should submit to reason; so it is likewise most fit and becoming, that human reason should submit to an all-knowing Mind. Let us therefore strive to elevate ourselves to the exalted height of the Supreme Intelligence; there shall Reason behold what she cannot discover in herself: she will there see how things, which in themselves have no certain event, are, however, certainly foreseen by a clear and infallible prescience; and she will perceive that this is no conjecture or vague opinion, but a simple, supreme, and unlimited knowledge.

Of varied creatures, mark th' unnumber'd store
Wand'ring at will the wide creation o'er:
Some drag along their lengths in speckled pride,
And trace the dust in furrows as they glide;

Some

Some soaring mount the winds with daring wing,
 And thro' the fields of air exulting sing;
 Whilst others o'er the fruitful valley rove,
 Or seek the shadows of the sounding grove.

Tho' varied brutal forms are endless found,
 Their looks dejected ever love the ground;
 This grov'ling posture stupefies the sense,
 And all their low propensions issue thence.
 Imperial man alone rears high his head,
 And spurns the sordid earth with stately tread:
 Admonish'd hence, if not by glaring toys
 Seduc'd, and sunk in Sense's baneful joys;
 Taught by his form erect, and lifted eye,
 Let man's aspiring thoughts still range on high;
 Thus—'twixt his aspect, and his tow'ring mind,
 We, pleas'd, a strict conformity shall find.

Since then every thing which is known is not,
 as I have before proved, perceived by its own
 inherent properties, but by virtue of powers re-
 siding in the person comprehending it; let us
 now examine, as far as it is possible for us, the
 disposition of the Divine Nature, that we may
 thence derive a clearer conception of the know-
 ledge of God.

It is the sentiment of all reasonable creatures,
 that God is eternal. Let us then consider what
 eternity is; because this will discover to us, at
 the same time, the nature of God, and of his
 knowledge.

Eternity then is a full and perfect possession of the whole of everlasting life, altogether and at once. Now this will evidently appear, by comparing it with things which endure only for a time: for every temporal existence glides on through the past to the present, and thence to the future; so that there is nothing under the laws of time, which can at once comprehend the whole extent of its duration. As it has lost yesterday, it does not as yet enjoy to-morrow; and as for to-day, it is plain you have no more of life than the present transitory moment. Whatever therefore be subjected to the flight of time, as Aristotle thought of the world, it may be without beginning and without end; and altho' its duration may extend to an infinity of time, it is not of such a nature as to be properly deemed eternal; because it does not comprehend at once the whole extent of its infinite duration, having no knowledge of things future, which are not yet arrived. Whatever comprehends and possesses at the same time, the fulness of an unlimited life; which catches hold of the future, and from which nothing that is past is escaped; that, and that alone, is truly eternal: for what is eternal must be in nothing defective; must enjoy itself; and must have the infinite succession of time clearly and perfectly under its perception. With regard to this point, some Philosophers,
who

who had heard it was the sentiment of Plato, that this world never had a beginning, and should never have an end *, from hence falsely concluded, that the created universe was co-eternal with its Creator. But it is one thing to be conducted through a life of infinite duration, which was Plato's opinion of the world; and another thing to comprehend at once the whole extent of this duration as present, which is manifest can only belong to the mind of the Deity. In fact, it is not so much by the measure of time, that God appears to us prior to and more ancient than his creatures, as by the properties of his nature, which are altogether simple and undivided: for the infinite progression of temporal things aims at a resemblance of that ever-present condition of an immoveable life, [the property of God only], which, as it is not capable either of copying or equaling, from immobility it degenerates into motion;

* The Philosophers here alluded to, are Crantor, Taurus of Berytus, Plotinus, Jamblichus, and other Platonists, who, in maintaining that the world is eternal, support their opinion upon the authority of Plato; although that philosopher says clearly, in his *Timæus*, that the world had a beginning; and adds afterwards, in the same book, "since the universe was framed by divine symmetry, it cannot be destroyed but by the same Almighty Power who formed it, and united together so firmly all its parts."

What might perhaps lead these philosophers into this mistake, is, that Plato sometimes calls matter eternal; by which he does not mean that matter visibly subsisted from all eternity, but that it subsisted intelligibly in the internal idea of God: and in this respect he mentions the world as eternal.

and,

and, instead of becoming an immoveable state, and simply present, it falls into an infinite measure of past and future time. But since it cannot possess at once the whole extent of its duration; yet as it never ceases in some measure to exist, it strives therefore in vain to emulate *that*, whose perfection it can neither attain or express, by attaching itself to the presence of the fleeting moment, which passes away with rapidity: and because this fleeting presence bears a resemblance to the immoveable presence just now mentioned, it communicates, to the things which partake of it, an appearance of existence*: but as it cannot stop or abide, it pursues its course through unlimited time; and hence it is, that by gliding along it continues its duration, the extent and plenitude of which it could not comprehend by resting in a permanent state. If therefore we would give to things their true names, we must say with Plato, that God is eternal, and the world perpetual. Since then every being judges of the things that are the objects of its understanding, according to the faculties of judgment which it possesses; and as God is in a state im-

* "It communicates to the things which partake of it an *appearance of existence*."—This ought to be considered in no other point of view than as one of the high flights of the Platonick philosophy: for many of the Platonists were of opinion, that nothing can be said with propriety to exist, but Deity; as he alone is self-existent, and the cause of existence.

moveable,

moveable, and eternally present to every thing, his knowledge soars above the progression of time, brings together the past and the future, though at infinite intervals, and comprehends, in his capacious intellect, all things, as if they were now transacting. If therefore you would properly define this prescience which gives to God the cognisance of every thing, it must not be considered as an anticipated knowledge of the future, but it ought more justly to be esteemed a knowledge of the *never-failing now* *. Hence, the word prescience, or foreknowledge, is not so applicable to the Divine Intelligence, as the word providence, or superintendence; for the exalted and sovereign Ruler looks down as it were from the summit of his universe, and beholds every thing moving in obedience to his infinitely wise direction.

But can you imagine that God imposes a necessity upon events by beholding them, when men, by seeing things, do not make them necessary? for you before acknowledged to me, that your viewing an action happening under your eye, lays no necessity upon it. If we then may be allowed to compare the knowledge of man with that of God, it is plain, that whilst you see only some things in a limited instant, God sees every thing present to him at once, in an unlimited eternity. His Divine foresight does not

* In which Deity beholds every thing as if it were immoveably present.

therefore

therefore change the nature and properties of things; but they are present to his view in the very order as they shall in time befall: nor does he judge confusedly of them, but distinguishes with precision the events which will necessarily happen, from those which will take place unconstrained by necessity. When you see, for example, a man walking on the earth, and the sun rising in the skies; although you see both of them at once, yet you plainly perceive that the action of the former is voluntary, whilst the motion of the latter is necessary. Thus the eye of Providence contemplates all things, without altering their nature and properties; for every thing in fact is present to him; though, with regard to its temporal event, it may be still future. Hence it follows, that when God knows a thing will be, although at the same time he perceives it is under no necessity of being, we must nevertheless allow, that this knowledge is not an uncertain conjecture, but a knowledge founded upon truth.

If you still insist, *that what God foresees will befall, must befall; and that things which cannot do otherwise than happen, must necessarily happen* (if in this way you force me to admit a necessity, it must be acknowledged, it is unquestionably true that things are under such a constraint; but this is at the same time a truth which can scarce be comprehended by any man, unless he is acquainted with the Divine counsels). But, in
answer

answer to the above objection, that what God foreknows will take place, must come to pass; I would have you to consider, that every thing which happens, as it bears a relation to the Divine knowledge, is necessary; but when considered in its own nature, it is altogether free and unconstrained: for there are two kinds of necessity; the one simple and absolute, as, men must necessarily die; the other conditional, as, if you know that a man walks, he must certainly do so: for that which is known cannot be otherwise than it is apprehended to be. But this circumstance or condition does by no means infer the other absolute necessity: for the nature of the thing itself does not here constitute the necessity, but the necessity arises from the conjunction of the condition. Thus, no necessity compels a man to walk, who voluntarily steps forward; yet when he steps forward, he must of necessity walk: so every thing which is present to the eye of Providence must assuredly be, although there be nothing in its own nature to constitute this necessity. Since Deity then beholds all future events, proceeding from the freedom of the will, as actually present; these events by that condition become necessary, in relation to the Divine apprehension; although, when considered in their own nature, they be at absolute liberty. All things therefore which God by his prescience knows will happen, shall undoubtedly come to pass; but as many of these events proceed from free-will, which, although

although they do befall, yet their existence changes not their nature, as, before they happened, they had it in their power not to happen.—But it is a matter of no moment, whether things in their own nature are necessary or not, since, by this circumstance of the Divine knowledge, to which they are all subject, they fall out in every respect as if they were constrained by necessity.—This, replied she, is explained, in the instance I gave you of the sun rising, and a man walking. Now as you see both of these occurrences happen under your view, they assuredly do happen; but nevertheless there is this difference, that the event of the former was necessary before it befel, whereas that of the latter was altogether free. Thus, all things which are present to the view of the Deity unquestionably exist; but some of them proceed from a necessity belonging to their own natures, as in the instance of the rising sun; while others flow from the will and power of the agent, as in the other example. It is then with reason we have asserted, that in respect of the Divine apprehension, things are necessary; but that they are absolutely free from the chains of Fate, when considered in themselves. In the same way, every thing which is an object of sense, is general in regard to its relation with reason, but particular when considered by itself.

But you may say, If it be in my power to change my purpose, I can deceive Providence, since I may not carry into execution those things which

the foresaw I would do. To this I answer, It is indeed in your power to deviate from your purpose; but as Providence sees really and actually what you can do; since she knows whether you will alter your resolutions or not, and upon what resolution you will fix; it is as impossible for you to deceive the prescience of God, as it would be to escape the notice of a present and steady observer of your actions; though, from the freedom of your will, you have it in your power to vary and diversify them ever so much. What!—shall the Divine knowledge, will you farther say, be changed according to my dispositions; and when my desires vary and fluctuate, fixing now upon this thing, now upon that, will the apprehension of the Deity vary with them? No, certainly, it will not. For the view of Deity, if I may speak, out-runs every future event, and brings it back into the presence of his own apprehension; which does not vary, as you imagine, to conform itself to your caprices, but remains immoveable, and anticipates and comprehends at once all your variety of changes: which faculty of comprehending and seeing all things as present, God doth not derive from the issue of future events, but from the simplicity of his own nature. Here then is a solution of what you objected to me formerly *, that it is a preposterous thing to say, that our temporal events are the

* See p. 197.—If it is admitted, that things in future are foreseen by God, because they are to happen; this makes prescience depend upon the issue of our temporal events.

causes of the Divine prescience : for the quality of the Sovereign Mind is such, that every thing is subordinate to the eternal presence of his knowledge; that he plans and directs all events, without being in the least dependent upon futurity.

Upon the whole then it must be concluded, the freedom of the human will remains unconstrained and inviolable ; and that those laws cannot be considered as unjust, which assign rewards and punishments to men, whose actions are in no respect under the compulsion of necessity. We ought therefore to comfort ourselves with this reflection, that God, who sits on high, perceives every thing, knows perfectly what is to happen, and that the eternal presence of his knowledge, concurring with the future quality of our actions, engages him always to dispense rewards to the good, and punishments to the wicked. The confidence which, for this reason, we repose in God, cannot be vain or fruitless ; neither will the prayers we address to him be inefficacious, when they proceed from a heart which is pure and upright. Detest, then, and flee every vice ; cultivate and pursue every virtue ; exalt your mind to God, the only true hope ; and offer up your prayers with humility to his throne. If you are ingenuous, you must confess the strict obligation that you are under, to live agreeably to the rules of wisdom and probity, as you know that all your actions are performed under the eye of an all-discerning Judge.

F I N I S.

